



# KWIB Work Ready Communities Review Committee Meeting Minutes Friday, August 5, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. EST

Zoom: [https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/V3jBBFQdnYt37T9Bj\\_SNiwkTkc28Mhsnfmuk1Tiw-GpVdmXiRd94ZHeBzLSi3kLd.KkTXXpEMeZtJr6tY](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/V3jBBFQdnYt37T9Bj_SNiwkTkc28Mhsnfmuk1Tiw-GpVdmXiRd94ZHeBzLSi3kLd.KkTXXpEMeZtJr6tY)

Passcode: Z1\$F0UWA

## **Call to Order**

Lori Ulrich, Chair called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. ET.

## **Committee Members Present:**

Lori Ulrich - CHAIR	Y	Kristina Slattery	Y
Jeremy Faulkner	Y	Morgan Kirk	Y
Cody Davidson	Y	Jon Sowards (Proxy)	Dorhonda Hawthorne
Anna Larson	No	Sara Jagers	Y
Moochie Hart	Y	Myra Wilson	Yes
Rolando Thacker	Y	Mark Hohmann (Proxy)	Yes
Robert Boone	Y	Joseph Paul	Yes

\*Others in attendance: Correy Eimer, Natalie Pasquenza, Ashley McCarty, and Debbie Dennison.

## **Welcome and Introductions**

Lori Ulrich, asked guests Ashley McCarty and Natalie Pasquenza to introduce themselves to the group and explain why they wanted to join the discussion. Ashley, Senior Manager of Community Engagement with Volunteers of America, is working on Recovery Ready Communities. Natalie, Vice President of External Relations of Volunteers of America, and they attended to hear more about Kentucky's Work Ready Communities.

## **Approval of May 5, 2022, Minutes**

Lori Ulrich, Chairperson, welcomed and thanked the committee for attending the meeting today and for being available even with such busy schedules. It is important for us all to participate to meet quorum for the counties that put in all the time for their applications. Ulrich then asked for any input on the minutes from the last meeting, May 5, 2022.

Lori motioned to approve the previous meeting minutes; Joseph Paul approved the motion; Robert Boone second the motion. All voted to approve, so the motion carried.

## **Work Ready Communities Business**

- **Work Ready (WR)/Work Ready in Progress (WRIP) Recertification Applications.** Two (2) counties submitted applications to for WR or WRIP Community status.
  - **Daviess County (WR)** – Joe stated that he thought they seem to know what they're doing. Lori explained that they answered her review question to her satisfaction, so she was very comfortable with moving them forward with recertification. Kristina also felt that they met all the criteria without any major concerns.

Kristina Slattery motioned for approval; Cody Davidson second the motion. All voted to approve, so the motion carried.

- **Pulaski County (WR)** - Sara Jagers read the questions that were asked of Pulaski County, which included providing examples of addressing work supply/demand in your community, listing committee participants, and listing reasons for the low enrollment for the several work-based learning opportunities. Kristina said she thought their work ethic seal participation is pretty good. Myra Wilson said she and Becky Wilson do a lot of work with this organization, the area, and they meet regularly, for example quarterly there is an industrial leader breakfast, and they are really engaged. They also just did a summit for standard rule America last week that I attended, so they're really trying to move the area forward.

Rolando Thacker motioned for approval, and Moochie Hart second the motion. All voted to approve, so the motion carried.

- **Work Ready (WR)/Work Ready in Progress (WRIP) Extension Request.** One (1) county submitted a three (3) year extension request for their WR community status. Lori Ulrich explained that the committee doesn't formally vote on extension request, but a discussion is necessary to make sure that the group is comfortable with moving the request forward to the KWIB.

- **Christian County (WR) – 3-year - Kristina Slattery** stated that she was comfortable with this request. She has visited several companies in that region recently and heard some of the different things they have going on for workforce. She really thinks they're going to continue to move forward, so she doesn't have any issue with approving their request. Lori Ulrich thinks they're in a situation with their growth right now that they're going to be moving forward. Joe stated that he thinks between their growth and then their efforts to reorganize and get themselves situated, they deserve at least three years to get all the balls in the air again. Myra said they have also reached out to her organization in order to understand the work that has been done in their area and they are interested in learning more. Kristina asked if three years is the standard, as it feels like a long time. Lori confirmed that it is the standard term and Sara confirmed that they haven't requested an extension before now. Each county has one opportunity to have a three-year extension. Stefanie Ebbens Kingsley said that if they are ready to recertify within the second year, there's no reason they can't go forward at that time instead of waiting to use the full three-year period. Sara said she would explain that to them and hopes to increase the communication with all WRC communities.

Lori reiterates that the group is comfortable with moving Christian County forward with the 3-year extension request. Since we do not begin a formal motion or vote for extensions, it is noted within the meeting minutes.

### **Overdue Counties**

Sara Jagers explained the counties listed below failed to meet the September 2021 deadline, which means each county is to start the process over again at the formative stage per the probationary letter notification they received in May 2021. This is the first time for the follow-up on this policy, so the group was asked to discuss how to handle the next step. The group decided that Board members would assist Sara with reaching out to the counties to set up meetings with them to discuss their WRC status.

➤ Overdue Counties, along with the committee member name who is going to assist Sara.

- Bath County - Jeremy, Lori, and Sara will work together.
- Casey County - Myra and Sara will work together.
- Clark County - Rolando and Sara will work together.
- Harlan County
- Jessamine County - Rolando and Sara will work together.
- Laurel County - Myra and Sara will contact.
- Lee County - Disaster Declaration Automatic 1-Year Extension
- Magoffin County
- Martin County - Disaster Declaration Automatic 1-Year Extension
- Owsley County

### **Grow NKY's Pillar 3**

Correy Eimer, the Associate Director for Workforce Development of the Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD), joined the committee meeting to discuss Grow NKY's Pillar 3 and to discuss the concern from counties not sure if it is beneficial to have the Work Ready Community accreditation. Correy explained that feedback from three of our rural northern Kentucky counties and their main question is what's the purpose and why are we going through this process, they really want assurance that it's going to make a difference. Specifically, from an economic development standpoint is this information really being used by our economic development partners to court new companies to come into the region in their particular counties and there may be evidence that our economic development friends are using this information, but if there is, I would say that it's important for us to communicate that to all of our county leadership because.

Stefanie Ebbens Kingsley stated that she recently had a conversation with Michelle DeJohn's Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services (OEAS) team uses this information for outreach, site placement, and feels that this information is valuable. Kristina Slattery said this has been the age-old question and with each project the company drives where that project is going to go based off workforce, but whether or not that county is Work Ready is not a part of their checklist. Kristina also feels that WRC status helps the Community answer the questions when they get to look because they've done work and they're not just saying, we can find people for you, or we're prepared for the employer. Kristina said from a branding perspective, she thinks communities use it as part of their marketing and branding tools, but it's not a silver bullet on the economic development side.

Correy Eimer said that he doesn't know if that's going to be convincing enough for counties to go through the process. Jeremy Faulkner thinks we have counties here, and one of two buckets you have ones like Boone Campbell with 10% who say we're doing great what's the advantage of us getting engaged in this process, we couldn't be doing any better than we currently are. Then you have other ones like what's on the list you know Harlan, Bath, and smaller counties, who are very economically depressed are saying we did this process seven years ago and nothing's changed, so why would we waste our time doing it again. Even though we don't imply that getting WRC status will bring more projects, it means there are two different perspectives. Stefanie wondered if there are similar style programs that Economic Development might have that could be rolled out with a communications pitch to really

crystallize that it's not the outcomes necessarily, it's the WRC process that allows communities to have these conversations and become prepared for skilled workforce. Joe Paul stated that with the counties asking if they are going to get something in return, the answer is yes. Will it be a job next week, no, but could it be a company next year, maybe. He went onto say that counties are going to get community building exercises that will build a workforce, which is one of the key things that companies look for in sites.

Cody Davidson expressed that he is hearing that work ready is focusing a lot on the output by having these hard measures of associate degree minimums and until you can't be work ready until you reach that percentage. As a group is the process, I think there's a way that we can framework work ready to focus on the endpoint as getting the community connected to the same goals and to let them know we are here to help shape those communities. As a result of the discussion, the WRC Review Committee decided that it was important to review the overall WRC process and make changes based on what we value and support needs of the communities, instead of focusing on data.

➤ ADJOURN

Lori Ulrich, Chair called the meeting to order at 10:37 a.m. ET.

DRAFT



## **Application for Recertification: Work Ready Status**

### **Edited on January 6, 2022**

All applications for Work Ready Community status submitted on or after January 7, 2022 must use this revised application and criteria.

**Sponsored by:**

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board  
Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet



# Daviess County Community Criteria Current Status

## Community Criteria Status

▼ Select a County ▼

Daviess

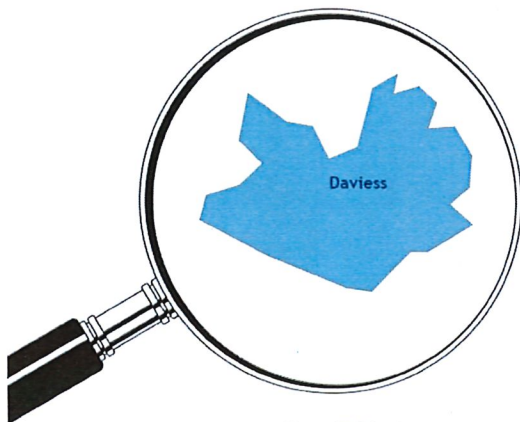
If a county meets all criteria, it will appear blue instead of red.

Though these five criteria are the only currently defined metrics, they are not the only criteria that are under consideration for the program. Some criteria include an exception rule, which you can learn more about on the Work Ready Community's website.

Visit <https://ced.ky.gov/WorkReady/> for more information.

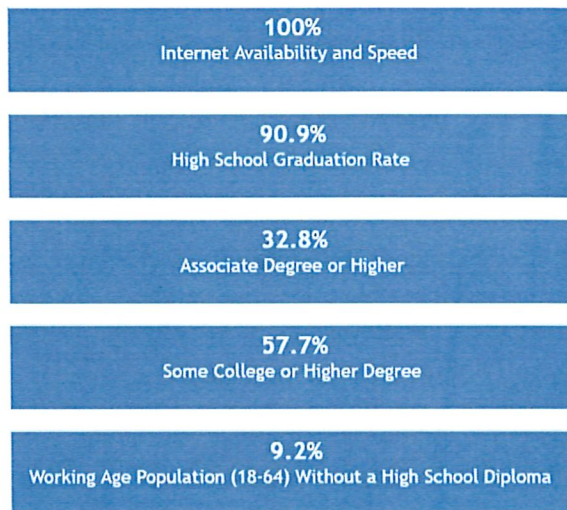
### Required Criteria

● Meets Criteria ● Does Not Meet Criteria



Meets All Criteria

\*Criteria are set to round to the nearest tenth of a percent on the dashboard but may have missed the cutoffs found at the top of the dashboard, resulting in a 'Does Not Meet Criteria.'



## WORK READY COMMUNITIES' APPLICATION

<b>NAME OF COUNTY:</b>	Daviess
------------------------	---------

Working Age (18-64) Population w/o HS diploma or HSE (%):	9.2%	High School Graduation Rate (%)	90.9%
Population with some college (%):	57.7%	Population with an Associate's Degree or Higher (%):	32.8%

Can be found at <https://kystats.ky.gov/latest/wrc>

	Number (#) Enrolled (Planned or Current)	Number (#) Awarded (Anticipated or Actual)
High School Work Ethic Seal	N/A	N/A
Career Readiness Certificates (NCRC, KCRC, KY Essential Skills Certificate, etc.)		11,786 NCRC and KESC awarded ( <a href="https://kystats.ky.gov/latest/wrc">https://kystats.ky.gov/latest/wrc</a> )
Work Based Learning Opportunities	25 GO FAME AMT Current 3 GO FAME CMM Current 20 GO FAME AMT New 9 GO Careers Current 20 GO Careers Anticipated	82 GO FAME AMT Graduates 16 GO FAME CMM Graduates 62 GO Careers Graduates 15 GO Females Graduates 135 Tech X Graduates

	5 GO Females Current 20 Tech X Current <b>102 – Total Enrolled</b>	<b>310 – Total Graduates</b>
--	--	------------------------------

Your Local Workforce Investment Board and school administrators can help gather this information.

	Rural (<50K) or Urban (>50K)? (Circle One)	Population (%) with availability to 25 Mbps
Internet Availability & Speed	<b>RURAL / URBAN</b>	97%

Can be found at <https://kystats.ky.gov/latest/wrc>

	Current Labor Force Participation Rate (%)	Goal over 3 years (%). (Write N/A for WRiP.)
Labor Force Participation Rate	62%	

Can be found at <https://kystats.ky.gov/latest/wrc>

Please also complete the attached narratives and the attach the following documentation:

- Committee Roster (including names, position/employer, and contact information).  
**The Owensboro/Daviess County GO-FAME Committee and the Owensboro Economic Development Workforce Development Committee act as the “Work Ready Community Committee” for our county. Roster is provided at the end of application.**
- Sign-in sheets for any Work Ready Communities Committee meetings.  
**Agendas for our GO-FAME Committee and EDC Workforce Development Committee are provided at the end of the application.**

## NARRATIVES/PLANS

For the following narratives, please include 2-3 **specific** examples of the programs, policies, or plans your community has implemented to meet or maintain the benchmarks presented. Data, statistics, and other measurements of success are strongly encouraged. Please limit your responses to each narrative to **approximately 2-3 paragraphs each**.

1. All applicants must complete Narrative 1.

**Narrative 1: Graduation Rate:** Please explain your county’s plan of action to achieve or maintain a 90% high school graduation rate. What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

The Daviess County Public School System and The Owensboro Public School System are dedicated to engaging students in their learning, leading to their desire and efforts to be high school graduates. Our schools provide the most up-to-date technologies, programs, and resources for students to prepare for industry recognized certifications, for degree programs, and for the workforce. We are also committed to student and family exposure to programs and opportunities available during secondary and postsecondary years. Communication with families throughout the community is imperative to keep students on track for graduation.

The district continues to work on identifying students early for intervention. Persistence to Graduation Strategies are used to ensure students are on track and supported to graduate.

2. All applicants must complete Narrative 2.



**Narrative 2: Working Age Population without High School Diploma or Equivalent (HSE):**

Please explain your county's plan of action to decrease the percentage of working age individuals in your county to or below 15%. What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

At the secondary level, all programs are tied to one of the in-demand industry sectors and they all link to postsecondary opportunities for both short-term certificates/certifications, as well as two-year associate degrees. The labor market data matches the programs that we are currently offering. When students can "see" that direct alignment, they are more likely to stay engaged in these programs and attain a high school diploma so that they can enter the workforce with credentials for an in-demand job.

The Regional Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment for Career and Technical Education committee has identified three root causes for the gaps in achieving performance indicator targets. These include: (1) a lack of support for students transitioning through technical career pathways; (2) a need for increased awareness of technical career pathways and related occupations as early as middle grades; and (3) the stereotyping of technical tracks, causing a lack of gender diversity in non-traditional fields.

Community ideas for improvement include:

- The need to expose students and their families at earlier ages to the world of opportunities.
- Intentional advising sessions between teacher and student so that all students feel connected and have a goal to receive a high school diploma.
- Strengthen and expand collaboration with industry and postsecondary partners through work-based learning opportunities, site visits, guest speakers, and mentor support.
- Offer more dual credit opportunities to help students transition from secondary to postsecondary.

3. All applicants must complete Narrative 3.

**Narrative 3: College Credit or Higher:** To be certified Work Ready, 43% of the population should have some college or a higher degree. Please explain your county's plan of action to achieve or increase this level of attainment. What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

The citizens of Daviess County, Kentucky, recognize the importance of postsecondary education and its impact on the economic stability of the region. A partnership that includes the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation (GO-EDC), local public and private school districts, Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC), Brescia University, Kentucky Wesleyan College, and Western Kentucky University at Owensboro is in place to focus on postsecondary educational access and attainment. Strategies and supports have been developed that students need to succeed in higher education and in the job market. This includes career pathways embedded with employer-driven short-term credentials that can lead to associate and bachelor degrees, personalized student support services; and a culture of diversity and inclusion.

**Career Pathways/Stackable Credentials/Short-Term Options**

OCTC has developed stackable credentials as part of a sequence of occupational-specific certificates that have labor market value by themselves, can be earned over time, and



provide a clear pathway for advancing in a career. These short-term credentials are aligned with degree programs to provide opportunities for adults to earn credentials that employers require and that lead to associate and bachelor's degrees. This was accomplished by identifying in-demand skills, refining and developing short-term credential programs aligned with those in-demand skills, and providing greater flexibility and access to learning. Through a collaboration with the GO-EDC, local employers, and OCTC, several work and learn programs are now offered. Some of the options include apprenticeship program and the GO FAME and GO Careers programs that offer an accelerated degree path where students work three days per week at their sponsoring company and attend industry-validated, college courses two days per week.

OCTC has 2+2 articulation agreements with Kentucky colleges and universities including Brescia University and Western Kentucky University. OCTC have two longstanding articulation agreements regarding the Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees. Brescia University accepts the AA or AS degree from OCTC, and from any of the sixteen colleges that make up the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Those degrees transfer with 60 to 67 credits and allow the transfer student a junior class standing at Brescia. In the 2019-20 academic year a new opportunity launched for all students in OCTC technical programs that offer the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree. Students can transfer up to 77 credit hours to Brescia University towards a bachelor's degree in Integrated Studies. Brescia University has created a personalized degree option for students as they continue their higher education journey. This new agreement expands the opportunity for transfer for students in 23 additional OCTC programs including Business Administration Systems, Computer and Information Technologies, Engineering and Electronics Technology, and numerous Allied Health programs.

In addition, WKU and OCTC have an articulation agreement in place for students with an associate of arts or an associate of science degree. This provides opportunities for OCTC students to transfer to WKU, save time and money, and complete their bachelor's degree close to home. In 2020, a new paralegal program agreement was announced for WKU and OCTC. It provides OCTC students in the Daviess County area an option to build on their associate degrees to complete a Bachelor of Science in Paralegal Studies. Since paralegals are employed in a large number of fields, including healthcare, government, education, military, business, banking, real estate, non-profit and many others this associate to bachelor's degree path in paralegal studies can open doors in a variety of careers.

### **Students Supports**

Postsecondary access and attainment require intensive recruitment, retention, and intervention services to ensure students, particularly at risk and under-skilled students, begin and complete the program, as well as earn their credentials. The postsecondary institutions in Daviess County have focused on providing adult learners personalized, wrap-around support. This includes assisting students with registration, college applications, financial aid, transcripts, books and supplies, career exploration, and academic progression. OCTC now employs Success Coaches who serve as the "single point of contact" liaison between college services and students, ensuring non-traditional students receive "high touch" services necessary for success. These Success Coaches track individual student progress and proactively provide appropriate intervention to overcome any life, work, and/or academic challenge that might preclude them from meeting their educational and career goals.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

The postsecondary institutions in Daviess County provide programs and services that address the interests and needs of adults from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and that encourage persistence in and completion of postsecondary credentials. Courses are accessible and reflect a diverse society and world. Course syllabi incorporate inclusive language and set the tone for diversity and inclusion by establishing expectations for valuing diverse viewpoints.

Some of the specific community activities that have fostered a culture of diversity and inclusion include the following:

- Owensboro Public Schools hired a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Director and a new English Language Student Services Coordinator to ensure communication to families is translated to a number of languages representing students.
- Owensboro Public Schools collaborated with Kentucky Wesleyan College to apply for a Kentucky Department of Education grant to fund a “Grow-Your-Own” initiative to target students of color who may want to become teachers.
- Owensboro Public Schools and OCTC partnered with the Owensboro Black Expo to identify a cohort of juniors and seniors of color to focus on college readiness skills.
- OCTC hired a new diversity director to lead efforts in creating a campus environment that values the exploration and appreciation of diversity while promoting inclusiveness and global awareness.
- Kentucky Wesleyan College hired a new coordinator of equity and inclusion.
- Daviess County Public Schools hired a new district coordinator for Diversity, Equity, and Poverty.

(Source: Green River Area Development District 2017 - 2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2021 UPDATE)

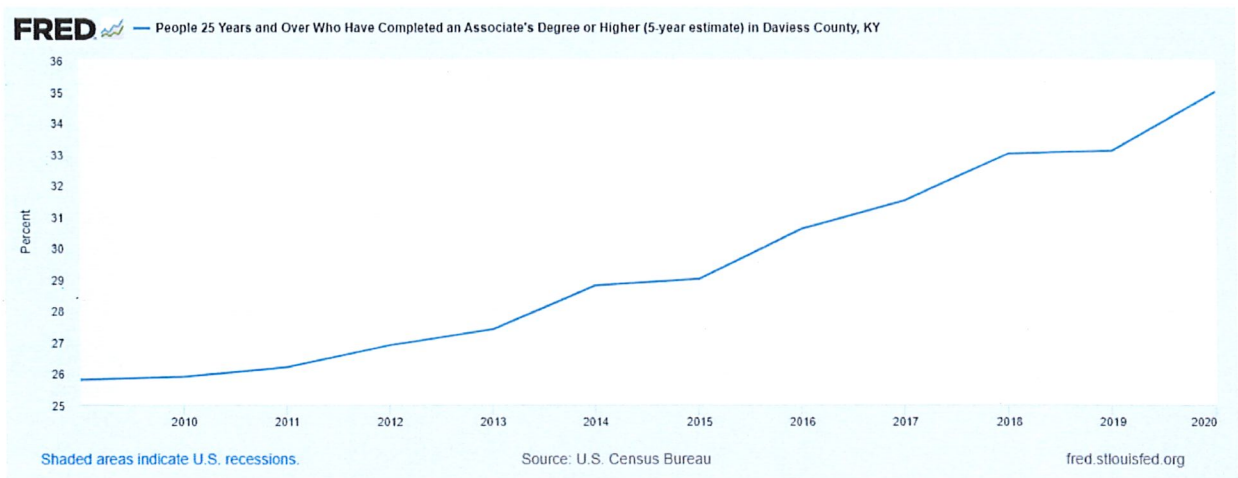
4. All applicants must complete Narrative 4.

**Narrative 4: Associates Degree or Higher:** To be certified Work Ready, 25% of the population should have some college or a higher degree. (If you qualify for the exception outlined in the criteria, please explain so here). Please explain your county’s plan of action to achieve or increase this level of attainment. What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

More than 25% of the population of Daviess County has some college or a higher degree. According to the Kentucky Center for Statistics, 38.2% of Daviess County’s working population (age 18-64) earned an associate degree or higher.  
(Source: <https://kystats.ky.gov/latest/wrc>)

According to the Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), the population of Daviess County over 25 years and over who have completed an associate's degree or higher (5-year estimate) was 35.00% in January of 2020.  
(Source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/S1501ACSTOTAL021059>)





To increase the level of degree attainment, OCTC implemented a college-wide Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan. Specific SEM plan goals include increasing the number of credentials 15% by fall 2023 from 903 to 1,038 and increasing the graduation rate 5% by fall 2023 from 41% to 46%. Additional strategies to increase degree attainment at OCTC include the implementation of an accelerated admissions program, First Year Experience Program, enhanced academic advising, transitional education program, increased Work and Learn Programs (GO FAME, Tech X, and apprenticeships) and the hiring of additional student success coaches.

5. All applicants must complete Narrative 5.

**Narrative 5: Broadband Availability:**  
 Please explain your county's plan of action to get internet availability to the necessary percentage of the population (60% for rural counties, 90% for urban counties). What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

Owensboro/Daviess County currently meets the internet availability and speed requirement for Work Ready Communities with Owensboro Municipal Utilities and Kenergy offering broadband to all customers in their service areas. However, it is worth noting, it was announced in April 2022 the Daviess County Fiscal Court has approved a contract with Conexon, LLC for the delivery of fiber-optic high speed internet service. By November of 2023, broadband services should be available to every home and business in Daviess County. The county is using federal American Rescue Plan Act funding for the project. The project will make affordable broadband available to 15,000 to 20,000 homes and businesses that do not already have it.

6. All applicants must complete Narrative 6.

**Narrative 6: Soft Skills Programs:** Discuss your programs that address work ethic/soft skills development and credentialing for both the secondary school and postsecondary adult populations. This includes the High School Work Ethic Seal, Kentucky Essential Skills Certificate, and any other supplemental programs for Career Readiness Certificates.

**The programs must meet the following minimum standards:**

- provide evidence of employer engagement in the program development process, including representation of the county's most prolific businesses and industries,
- provide evidence that employers recognize achievement of work ethic or soft skills credential in their hiring/advancement processes,
- programs must include measurable goals for annual improvement in the raw number and percentage of workforce credentialed,
- plans must include a strategy to assure employers of the sustainability of the programs, and
- programs must address, at a minimum, the following topical areas: attendance/punctuality, communication, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking.

### **Workplace Essential Skills Certification Program**

Junior Achievement and the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation have partnered with area high schools and local employers to contribute to the development of current and future employees and help continue to meet the Work Ready requirement of soft skills development.

The Workplace Essential Skills Certification for high school seniors helps employers identify soon to be high school graduates who have dedicated time and effort to preparing to enter the workforce. The heart of the program is Junior Achievement Career Success program, which focuses on areas like communicating effectively, building rapport, working in teams and assessing, improving and applying skills. All students who apply for the Workplace Essential Skills Certification attend all 7 sessions of the JA Skills program.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this program was put on hold. The school systems are looking forward to reinvigorating the program in the 22-23 school year.

7. All applicants must complete Narrative 7.

**Narrative 7: Work Based Learning Opportunities:** Explain what Work Based Learning Opportunities (apprenticeships, internships, co-ops, etc.) are available in your county. What employers are involved in your community? How are these opportunities promoted? What plans do you have to increase these opportunities? What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome these challenges?

A collaborative partnership with local employers, the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation (GO EDC), and Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC) provides innovative, apprentice-style education and training options designed to create one of the most highly skilled workforces in Kentucky. Several work-based learning and internship opportunities are available in the Daviess County, Kentucky area including GO FAME, GO Females, and GO Careers programs, as well as electrical apprenticeship programs.

Since 2015, the GO FAME (Greater Owensboro Chapter of KY FAME-Kentucky Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education) program has produced 98 skilled and experienced



multi-craft technicians. GO FAME is an apprenticeship-style training program for participants to earn an associate's degree while gaining valuable experience working in a manufacturing environment. Participants take classes at OCTC two days a week while working for a sponsoring employer who pays a portion of tuition costs and an hourly wage for time on the job. In as little as 18 months, program completers can earn an Advanced Manufacturing Technician or a Computerized Manufacturing and Machining Associate in Applied Science Degree. In addition to the 98 graduates to date, 28 active GO FAME students are currently taking classes and a newly selected cohort of 20 will begin classes in fall 2022.

An additional option of the GO FAME program is GO Females, an acronym for Greater Owensboro Facilitating Equitable Manufacturing and Leadership Educational Solutions. GO Females promotes increased diversity in manufacturing and prepares underserved incumbent workers for technician and leadership positions. The first GO Females cohort of 20 female workers from UniFirst began classes on October 21, 2019. Fifteen of those graduated in summer 2021 with an associate's degree from OCTC. A second cohort, open to the community, launched in fall 2021.

Modeled after the highly successful GO FAME program, GO Careers launched in 2016 as a solution to train the next generation of workers for the business and financial industries. GO Careers students attend OCTC eight hours per week, while working fulltime at their sponsoring company. Upon completion of the program, students receive an Associate in Applied Science degree in Business Administration Systems and several certificates with the additional benefit of practical skills and paid work experience. The GO Careers program began with US Bank as its lead employer champion and since has added UniFirst Corporation and The Malcolm Bryant Corporation as additional employer sponsors. To date, 62 individuals have graduated from the GO Careers program. In 2021, GO Careers expanded its delivery model to include a virtual option called C2C (coast to coast) which allows US Bank employees across the country to participate.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1701 partners with OCTC through its Workforce Solution division to provide an apprenticeship program. This partnership offers IBEW Local 1701 apprentices enhanced learning options to attain an Associate in Applied Science degree in Electrical Technology that leads to greater opportunities for employment and career mobility. This program is comprised of five years of general and technical studies, as well as on-the-job training. OCTC provides the general education and technical training components to prepare apprentices for high-wage, competitive careers. Additional apprenticeship models have been developed and launched to include Norman King Electric and Westerfield Electric.

Employers involved in these work and learn and apprenticeship programs include: ADM Industries; Big Rivers Electric; Castlen Steel; Daicel Safety Systems; Domtar; Hollison; Hunter Douglas; IBEW Local 1701; Kentron; Kimberly Clark; The Malcolm Bryant Corporation; Metalsa; Miles Enterprises; MPD Industries; Norman King Electric; OMICO Plastics; Paramount Tool and Die; Perdue Farms; Precision Roll Grinders; Specialty Foods Group; Sun Windows; The Hines Group; Trifecta; Toyotetsu MidAmerica; Unifirst; US Bank; Westerfield Electric; Whitworth Tool and Die; and Yager Materials.

8. All applicants must complete Narrative 8.

**Narrative 8: Engagement of Underserved Populations:** The KWIB has identified 10 categories of underserved individuals: those with disabilities, veterans, ex-offenders, foster youth, youth and young adults, recovery, homeless, unemployed, underemployed, and foreign-born.

Please select the 2-3 most prevalent populations in your community and discuss your plan to provide employment & engagement opportunities to individuals in the underserved categories. Plan should address potential barriers such as childcare, health, housing, and transportation that may exist.



**The Reentry Success Program.** The Daviess County Detention Center, the City of Owensboro, Daviess County Fiscal Court, GOEDC and OCTC developed and will launch The Reentry Success Program” in spring 2022. This program will provide inmates the opportunity to complete both the Enhanced Operator I and Workforce Readiness Certificates, which will be administered to the inmates via OCTC’s online FlexTrain platform. Inmates selected for the program will complete several courses focused on workplace skills critical to employment within manufacturing and skilled trades companies, including Hand and Power Tools, Lean Operations, Safety, and Problem Solving, and Workplace Principles. Successful program completers will have an opportunity to interview with area employers. Inmates selected for the program will be state inmates that have been classified by the Kentucky Department of Corrections as community or minimum level custody inmates. They are already assigned as inmate workers with certain work assignments at the Detention Center. These inmates are considered ideal candidates for the program because their cases have been adjudicated and resolved, and they are serving sentences that would provide many opportunities to complete the program. These inmates are already serving time for non-violent convictions (vs. inmates awaiting trial) and they will likely be returning to the community soon. Initial funding for the program is being provided by the City of Owensboro and the Daviess County Fiscal Court. The two municipalities have committed funding to support program participation for 40 inmates.

**Afghan Refugees Program.** Afghan refugees are settling into Daviess County, Kentucky with the help of community volunteers, the International Center, local employers, workforce leaders, and churches. Since the end of October 2021, approximately 170 Afghan refugees have come to the community. The International Center offers culture orientation classes targeting a variety of aspects of American life, including U.S. laws, navigating the health care system and using public transportation. The center works with refugees to help schedule job interviews, and to provide classes on résumé writing and interviewing for jobs, as well as working through tax and benefit forms. A case manager follows up throughout the employment process with the client and employers to see how things are going and if any concerns need to be addressed. On February 1, the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce hosted an employment fair for Afghan refugees. Local employers participated in the job fair and some have reached out about hiring refugees include Toyota, Owensboro Public Schools, Daviess County Public Schools, Envision Contractors LLC and Diversified Management Inc. The adult refugees are enrolled in English language learning classes through a partnership with OCTC. In addition, the local colleges visited the hotel where many refugees were housed upon arrival to provide resources and information about educational opportunities and programs.

9. All applicants must complete Narrative 9. Supporting statistics available at <https://kystats.ky.gov/KYLM>

**Narrative 9: Workforce Supply vs. Demand:** Please identify the top five occupational needs for each KWIB sector that are required currently and over the next five years. Discuss how your community works with your local workforce board, educational partners, and employers to review and subsequently analyze occupational demand (by industry sector) in order to develop a system that supplies industry with the talent pipeline needed for a thriving business environment.

Workforce development priorities for Daviess County focus on local employer needs in the health care, advanced manufacturing, transportation/logistics, business services/IT, and construction industries. To meet this need, the Green River Regional Business Services Team was formed which is comprised of community, workforce, and educational partners. The Green River Regional Business Services Team aligns and responds to the needs of employers and job seekers through the collaborative optimization of workforce professional resources by communicating and customizing value-added business solutions. The team works with employers on finding qualified workers, as well as building a talent pipeline. Some of the services offered include the hosting of job fairs, Rapid Response Services/WARN notices, TRADE Petitions, Layoff Aversion Strategies, on-the-job training, recruitment strategies, incumbent worker training/customized training, job postings, assistance with apprenticeship development, applicant screening, labor market information, WorkKeys assessment/national career readiness certificate, and industry partnership programs.



## Owensboro/Daviess County GO-FAME Committee Roster

NAME	EMPLOYER	CONTACT INFORMATION
Claud Day	ADM Industries	270-852-2540
Tracy Cole	Big Rivers Electric Corporation	270-827-2561
Lisa Garrett	Big Rivers Electric Corporation	270-827-2561
Emily Davis	Castlen Steel	270-264-2734
Kenneth Calloway	Century Aluminum	270-685-2493
Jennifer Southard	Dart Polymers	270-926-3434
Matt Robbins	Daviess County Public School System, Superintendent	270-852-7600
Amanda Jerome	Daviess County Public Schools, Career Readiness	270-852-7600
Jason Curry	Domtar	270-926-6961
Brittaney Johnson	Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation, President/CEO	270-926-4339
Jeff Alexander	Holiday World	812-937-5241
David Humphrey	Hollison	270-713-0274
Howard Burton	Ken-Tron Manufacturing	270-684-0431
Lauren McCarty	Malcolm Bryant Corporation	270-926-1103
Paula Bazemore	Metalsa	270-691-5800
Rhonda Johnson	TTMA	270-687-9005
Britney O'Bryan	MPD, Inc.	270-685-6200
Cindy Fiorella	Owensboro Community & Technical College, Workforce Solutions	270-686-4444
Dr. Scott Williams	Owensboro Community & Technical College, President	270-686-4400
Will Mounts	OMICO Plastics	270-926-9981
Monica Rice	Owensboro Public Schools, Career Readiness	270-686-1000
Dr. Matthew Constant	Owensboro Public Schools, Superintendent	270-686-1000
Victor Cernius	Regional Water Resource Agency	270-687-8450
Taya Hammersbach	Sun Windows	270-684-0691
Kerry Bailey	UniFirst	270-683-2242
Patty Millay	US Bank	270-689-7562
Karen Snyder	Waupaca Foundry	812-547-0700
Kim Barton	Whitworth Tool	270-756-0098

**Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation Workforce  
Development Committee Roster**

NAME	EMPLOYER	CONTACT INFORMATION
Al Mattingly	Daviess County Fiscal Court, Judge Executive	270-685-8424
Angela Morrison	Truist	270-688-7730
Keith Ellis	Kenergy	270-926-4141
Kevin Carrico	South Central Bank	270-691-0919
Dr. Scott Williams	Owensboro Community & Technical College	270-686-4400
Tom Ed Booth	US Bank	270-689-7562
Will Mounts	OMICO Plastics	270-926-9981



Greater Owensboro  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Making Owensboro Greater

GOEDC Board of Directors  
Workforce Development Committee Meeting  
September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Vault Conference Room

- I. Welcome.....Elizabeth Griffith
- II. Review of Current Workforce Initiatives.....Elizabeth Griffith
  - a. GO-FAME/GO-CAREERS Program
  - b. Owensboro Innovation Academy Collaboration
  - c. Interapt
  - d. "Grow the Boro" Initiative
- III. Discussion of Workforce Needs and Future Programs.....All
- IV. Adjournment..... Elizabeth Griffith



Greater Owensboro  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Making Owensboro Greater

GOEDC Board of Directors  
Workforce Development Committee Meeting  
February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room

- I. Welcome.....Elizabeth Griffith
- II. Guest Speaker Presentation..... Elizabeth Griffith
  - a. Mike Rutz and Ben Ledo from *MakeMyMove*
- III. Update on Workforce Initiatives.....Elizabeth Griffith
  - a. DCDC Reentry Success Program
  - b. Owensboro Innovation Academy
- IV. Adjournment..... Elizabeth Griffith



**AGENDA**

GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
Board of Directors Meeting  
June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

- I. Call to Order ..... Lauren McCarty
- II. Consent Items ..... Lauren McCarty
  - a. Minutes from the February 25th, 2020 Board Meeting
- III. Old Business ..... Lauren McCarty
- IV. New Business ..... Lauren McCarty
  - a. Brookings KY FAME Survey ..... Gardner Carrick
  - b. GO-FAME Program Update ..... Katie Vincent
    - i. Program Statistics
    - ii. OCTC COVID-19 Accommodations
    - iii. New cohort fall 2020
      - 1. 21 unsponsored students starting AMT
      - 2. 3 unsponsored student starting CMM
- V. GO FEMALES update..... Sheri Plain
- VI. Action Items ..... Lauren McCarty
- VII. Announcements ..... Lauren McCarty
- VIII. Adjournment ..... Lauren McCarty



**AGENDA**

GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
Board of Directors Meeting  
September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

- I. Call to Order ..... Lauren McCarty
- II. Consent Items ..... Lauren McCarty
  - a. Minutes from the June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Board Meeting
- III. Old Business ..... Lauren McCarty
- IV. New Business ..... Lauren McCarty
  - a. GO-FAME Program Update ..... Katie Vincent
    - i. New 2020 Cohort Sponsorship Discussion
    - ii. GO-FAME Selection Process Discussion
    - iii. 2020-21 Recruitment Discussion
    - iv. OCTC COVID Update
  - b. Schedule Q4 Board Meeting
- V. Action Items ..... Lauren McCarty
- VI. Announcements ..... Lauren McCarty
- VII. Adjournment ..... Lauren McCarty





**AGENDA**

GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
Board of Directors Meeting  
November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

- I. Call to Order .....Lauren McCarty
- II. Consent Items .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Minutes from the September 10, 2020 Board Meeting
- III. Old Business .....Lauren McCarty
- IV. New Business .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. GO-FAME Program & Student Update .....Antoine Smith-Rouse
  - b. Student Interview & Selection Schedule.....Katie Vincent
  - c. Discussion of Executive Committee for 2021.....Lauren McCarty
- V. Action Items .....Lauren McCarty
- VI. Announcements ..... Lauren McCarty
- VII. Adjournment ..... Lauren McCarty



**AGENDA**  
GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
Board of Directors Meeting  
February 25th, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

- I. Call to Order .....Lauren McCarty
- II. Consent Items .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Minutes from the November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Board Meeting
- III. Old Business ..... Lauren McCarty
- IV. New Business .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. New Company and Student Recruitment .....Lauren McCarty
  - b. GO-FAME Program Update .....Antoine Smith-Rouse
  - c. GO-Females Program Update .....Sheri Plain
  - d. Discuss Interview and Selection Dates .....Katie Vincent
- V. Action Items .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Review and Approval of By-Laws
  - b. 2021 Officers Slate
- VI. Announcements .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. 2021 Meeting Dates – will be the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the first month of every quarter
    - i. Thursday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.
    - ii. Thursday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.
    - iii. Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.
- VII. Adjournment ..... Lauren McCarty



**AGENDA**

GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
Board of Directors Meeting  
April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

- I. Call to Order .....Lauren McCarty
- II. Consent Items .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Minutes from the February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 Board Meeting
- III. Old Business ..... Lauren McCarty
- IV. New Business .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. GO-FAME Program Update .....Antoine Smith-Rouse
  - b. GO-Females Program Update .....Antoine Smith-Rouse
  - c. GO-FAME Company Recruitment Update.....Katie Vincent
  - d. Company Sponsorship List .....Lauren McCarty
  - e. Review of Interview Questions.....Lauren McCarty
- V. Action Items .....Lauren McCarty
- VI. Announcements .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Welcome Century Aluminum
  - b. Reminder: Proxy List
- VII. Adjournment ..... Lauren McCarty



**AGENDA**

GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
Board of Directors Meeting  
July, 29<sup>th</sup> 2021 at 3:00 p.m.  
Commerce Center Conference Room

- I. Call to Order .....Lauren McCarty
- II. Consent Items .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Minutes from the April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Board Meeting
- III. Old Business ..... Lauren McCarty
- IV. New Business .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. GO-FAME/GO-Careers Program Update .....Antoine Smith-Rouse
  - b. Company Recruitment Lunch.....Lauren McCarty
- V. Action Items .....Lauren McCarty
- VI. Announcements .....Lauren McCarty
- VII. Adjournment .....Lauren McCarty



**AGENDA**

GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
 Board of Directors Meeting  
 September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.  
 Commerce Center Conference Room

- I. Call to Order .....Lauren McCarty
- II. Consent Items .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Minutes from the July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Board Meeting
- III. Old Business ..... Lauren McCarty
- IV. New Business .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. GO-FAME/GO-Careers Program Update .....Antoine Smith-Rouse
  - b. GO-FAME Hybrid.....Sheri Plain
  - c. UniFirst GO-Females Graduation Update
- V. Action Items .....Lauren McCarty
- VI. Announcements .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Welcome New Member – Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari
  - b. Adv. Manufacturing Pathway for High School
- VII. Adjournment .....Lauren McCarty

2022 GO-FAME Board Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022



**AGENDA**  
GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
Board of Directors Meeting  
January 27, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.  
Commerce Center Conference Room

- I. Call to Order ..... Scott Judd
- II. Consent Items ..... Scott Judd
  - a. Minutes from the July 29th, 2021, and Sept. 30th, 2021, Board Meeting
- III. Old Business ..... Scott Judd
- IV. New Business .....Scott Judd
  - a. GO-FAME/GO-Careers Program Update .....Antoine Smith-Rouse
- V. Action Items ..... Scott Judd
- VI. Announcements ..... Scott Judd
- VII. Adjournment ..... Scott Judd

2022 GO-FAME Board Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022





**AGENDA**

GO FAME - GO CAREERS  
 Board of Directors Meeting  
 April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.  
 Commerce Center Conference Room

- I. Call to Order ..... Lauren McCarty
- II. Consent Items ..... Lauren McCarty
  - a. Minutes from the July 29th, 2021, Sept. 30th, 2021, and January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Board Meeting
- III. Old Business ..... Lauren McCarty
- IV. New Business .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. GO-FAME/GO-Careers Program Update .....Antoine Smith-Rouse
  - b. GO-FAME Officers.....Lauren McCarty
  - c. Interview Sign-Ups.....Lauren McCarty
- V. Action Items .....Lauren McCarty
  - a. Point System for GO-FAME..... Antoine-Smith Rouse
- VI. Announcements .....Lauren McCarty
- VII. Adjournment .....Lauren McCarty

2022 GO-FAME Board Meeting Dates:

- Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022



# Somerset-Pulaski County

## Application for Recertification: Work Ready Status





## WORK READY COMMUNITIES APPLICATION

<b>NAME OF COUNTY:</b>	<b>Pulaski</b>
------------------------	----------------

<b>Working Age (18-64) Population w/o HS diploma or HSE (%):</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>High School Graduation Rate (%)</b>	<b>96.4%</b>
<b>Population with some college (%):</b>	<b>51.7%</b>	<b>Population with an Associate's Degree or Higher (%):</b>	<b>26.4%</b>

	<b>Number (#) Enrolled (Planned or Current)</b>	<b>Number (#) Awarded (Anticipated or Actual)</b>
<b>High School Work Ethic Seal</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>111 Juniors 91 Seniors</b>
<b>Career Readiness Certificates (NCRC, KCRC, KY Essential Skills Certificate, etc.)</b>	<b>3,855</b>	<b>3,855</b>
<b>Work Based Learning Opportunities</b>	<p>Current registered programs;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electricom – Tree Trimmer – Currently 0 enrolled – 3 completed</li> <li>• Electricom – UTAP – Currently 8 enrolled – year 1</li> <li>• Bluegrass Trucks – Diesel Technician – Currently 0 enrolled, may take 1 apprentice</li> <li>• CoreTrans – Diesel Technician – May take 1</li> <li>• Dr. Schneider – Tool &amp; Die Technician – May already have 1 enrolled</li> <li>• Dr. Schneider – Industrial Maintenance Technician – 0 enrolled, may be looking for 1</li> <li>• Governor's Office of Early Childhood (GOEC) – Childcare Director – Currently 0 enroll</li> <li>• Meade Tractor – Ag Equipment Technician – 0 Enrolled, looking for 1</li> </ul>	<p>The following are the FAME cohorts and completers/graduates who earned an AAS and diploma in IMT, as well as six certifications, per graduate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Cohort 3 (August 2017 – May 2019) – 11 graduates</li> <li>* Cohort 4 (August 2018 – May 2020) – 19 graduates</li> <li>* Cohort 5 (August 2019 – May 2021) – 20 graduates</li> <li>* Cohort 6 (August 2020 – May 2022) – 10 graduates</li> </ul>

	Rural (<50K) or Urban (>50K)? (Circle One)	Population (%) with availability to 25 Mbps
Internet Availability & Speed	<b>RURAL / URBAN</b>	100%

	Current Labor Force Participation Rate (%)	Goal over 3 years (%). (Write N/A for WRiP.)
Labor Force Participation Rate	94.49%	While Kentucky unfortunately has one of the lowest labor participation rates in the country, Somerset and Pulaski County will continue to do our very best to be a leader throughout the Commonwealth. With the latest repercussions we are seeing nationwide with our economy and a predicted recession, it is hard to predict, but we anticipate a labor rate increase of <b>97%</b> .

**Please also complete the attached narratives and include documentation of community commitment.**

SPEDA is an aggressive, innovative and collaborative city-county partnership that leads the way in improving the economic, political and social well-being of its citizens. Using a proactive mindset, SPEDA utilizes industrial recruitment, retail and commercial development, tourism marketing and promotion, education, workforce development, arts and entertainment with overall community planning to improve quality of life in Somerset, Pulaski County and the Lake Cumberland region.

Workforce development and education are a top priority in Somerset-Pulaski County. SPEDA is involved in every turn at making sure processes are in place to grow a strong workforce, maintain a seamless transition for new industry partners and keep the lines of communication open for existing businesses. We seek valuable feedback, listening to constructive criticism and helping businesses where we can at every turn. SPEDA is intimately focused on increasing interaction with existing businesses in Somerset-Pulaski County. We are continuously striving to develop and support new programs that will foster business growth, improve workforce development, and encourage industry leaders.

Our mission, vision and values are at the core of every initiative we undertake at SPEDA. We believe unity and collaboration build a stronger economy. We can accomplish so much more if we work together.

**Narrative 1: Graduation Rate:** Please explain your county's plan of action to achieve or maintain a 90% high school graduation rate. What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

Somerset and Pulaski County are blessed with four great school systems two of those being Somerset Independent Schools and Pulaski County Schools. All three of our local high schools recently placed in the top 30 of U.S. News and World Report's Best Kentucky High Schools ranking. These schools boast high graduation rates and offer rigorous academics in addition to a wide variety of extracurricular and leadership programs that help student develop skills to succeed beyond high school. Education is the key to the success of our community and our local economy. SPEDA is committed to fostering relationships and investing in programs that help build a bright future for our students.

This is how Somerset Independent Schools are committed to overcoming the graduation rate challenges:

Graduation rates are broken into 4-year cohort rates and 5-year cohort rates. Both our four-year and 5-year rates have increased over the past several years. The average graduation rate is a combination of the two and climbed to 94% for the 2020-2021 class. We were particularly pleased with this progression even in the face of the pandemic. We believe that intentionality, monitoring, and communication with at-risk students was key to improving the graduation rate.

The greatest challenges on the horizon in regard to graduation rate lay in the challenges of our at-risk students. The increase in traumatic life events and transiency of our students are their greatest challenges and thus ours. Mental health and the ability to help students cope and move forward in their personal lives is key to their learning progression and engagement in the learning process.

Another key challenge towards increasing graduation rate is the need to keep students engaged in relevant, meaningful course work. Increasing course options in CTE pathways along with increasing opportunities for project-based learning create additional learning tools in helping students find their purpose in education and remaining engaged through graduation.

These, along with flexible learning solutions such as credit recovery will be key to continue to maintain and/or improve our graduation rate.

On the statistical aspect, there are some misnomers when looking at graduation rate. First, students labeled as Mild Severe Disabilities who take the Alternate State Assessment are counted as non-graduates and count against a school's graduation rate. I find that insulting primarily to the students with these disabilities as well as to the professionals who work with them. Secondly, students who are transient frequently change schools and sometimes do not enroll in school once they leave a district or leave the state. We may have a student who was enrolled for less than a week 4 years ago and moved away only to never enroll in school again and that student counts against our graduation rate. We had no realistic ability to serve the student needs or implement safeguards for at-risk students, yet the graduation rate suffers has a result. Granted, this is a limited number of students but in a district our size, each student who counts against our graduation rate effects the percentage by about .9%.

This is how Pulaski County Schools are committed to overcoming the graduation rate challenges:

Pulaski County Schools consistently maintain a 97% graduation rate. This high benchmark is achieved through coordination and collaboration between teachers, counselors, support staff, school leaders, and district leaders, and is organized by a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). This support system addresses the needs of the whole child -- to ensure that students' academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and mental health needs are met, so they can be successful in school, and then successfully transition to life after high school.

Teams of teachers, school leaders, and district leaders regularly and systematically review student data, including grades, attendance, and behavior. Well-established interventions are in place to assist struggling students and help them catch up. Team members also share and discuss individual student concerns that don't appear on computer-generated reports, such as students' mental health struggles, family issues, and illnesses, and then they collectively seek resources and solutions to help each student overcome these barriers to success.

Furthermore, Pulaski County Schools has built a robust academic program, K-12, that includes a wide variety of courses, clubs, and extracurricular opportunities that encourage students to explore future career opportunities, find places to get involved, find friends, and contribute to build up their peers, their school, and their community. Our courses are rigorous, and we offer many honors classes, dual credit, Advanced Placement (AP), and Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, which prepare students to be responsible, conscientious, and productive citizens.

Through these various in-school programs we will ensure our students have the resources and guidance to prepare them for the next phase in their lives, we will ensure that we keep the graduation rate above 90%.

**Narrative 2: Working Age Population without High School Diploma or Equivalent (HSE):**

Please demonstrate that your county has less than or equal to 13% of the working age population without a high school diploma/equivalent. How do you plan to reach 10%? What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

Our Pulaski Adult Education program is utilizing several measures for recruitment and retention to try to increase our enrollment and GED completion. We work with numerous community partners, including corrections, re-entry, and recovery for student referrals and to assist students in overcoming barriers. Flexible scheduling is offered in the program which may consist of classes, facilitated labs, and one-on-one tutoring. Students can completely through distance learning options if that works best for them. The program creates individual learning plan based upon student need and ability to participate. Staff tried to help the students complete the program as quickly as they are able. GED testing options include testing center, mobile testing units, and online proctored testing.

**Narrative 3: College Credit or Higher:** To be recertified Work Ready, 45% of the population should have some college or a higher degree. Please explain your county's plan of action to increase this level by 1% every three years. What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

Pulaski County currently has 51.7% of its working age population (18-64) with some college or higher degree. While this meets and exceeds the current benchmarks, Pulaski County workforce partners are working together to continuously increase this percentage. Some of the major initiatives currently underway to increase this include:

- Somerset Community College (SCC) offers hundreds of certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees that are specifically designed to make obtaining a college credential easy. SCC offers classes in various modalities such as face-to-face, hybrid, on-line, or learn on demand. SCC has 2 campuses and 4 centers across the region to make it easier and more convenient for students to earn a credential. SCC has day, night and weekend classes to increase student access and success.
- SCC has recently added or expanded the following academic programs to our Somerset Campus:
  - Expanded the Aviation Maintenance program by offering an evening format. This increased the program capacity by 15 students.
  - Expanded the HVAC program to the Somerset South Campus (a few years ago), adding 20 new students.
  - Pending approval, SCC plans to offer two new programs this fall: Cybersecurity and Logistics
  - Increased number ADN Somerset Day nurse applicants by 10, from 60 to 70 students; Increased number of Evening Weekend Program students by 10, from 35 to 45
  - In the upcoming year, SCC plans to introduce the BILT (Business & Industry Leadership Team) model in a few programs as an alternative to advisory committees. The desire is to have more involvement from our business and industry partners.
- SCC partners with Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital (LCRH) to address needs for clinical adjuncts, earlier recruiting, offering more internship opportunities to both PN and ADN, and continuing with scholarships for their employees. Radiography students will soon be included in these internship opportunities.
- SCC has recently purchased two 10,000+ square foot buildings located in the Valley Oak Technology Park. These buildings are being renovated to offer both workforce and academic classes in the heart of Pulaski County's industrial and technology parks to provide easier access for the working age population to earn a credential. Classes will be offered in modules to allow students to earn their credential as they have time to earn them. Additionally, the labs will be set up as "open labs" which allows the students to come on the day and time that is most convenient for them versus having set lab times/dates. Finally, many classes will be offered as competency-based, allowing

students to move forward with their classes, quicker or slower, depending upon their personal situation. This should help increase the number of working age adults obtain a college credential.

- SCC Workforce Solutions department focuses on upskilling adults and helping them obtain the skills, industry certifications, license renewals, or college credentials they need to improve their lives. SCC Workforce Solutions offers the following types of programming:
  - Short term training programs such as truck driver training, apprentice lineman training, Fiber Optic Association (FOA) industry certifications and many other similar programs. These short term training programs enable adults to get into college, learn a specific skill, and enter the workplace. Many award an industry certification or licensure, like CDL-A license or the FOA industry certifications.
  - Apprenticeship programs such as the Tree Trimmer, Utility Technician, and Diesel apprenticeship programs. These work and learn programs enable adults to be employed by a sponsoring company and go to college to earn a state or federally registered apprenticeship and in some cases, earn college credentials.
  - Business and industry customized training classes such as industrial maintenance, machine tool, leadership, customer service, information technology, safety, and other types of training needed by business and industry. These classes are customized to meet the specific needs of that company and tailored to use company documents to help enhance the learning of the employees. For example, in a blue print reading class, the instructor will use company blueprints as part of the training exercises. These classes are offered for credit and non-credit, depending upon the class being offered. Industry certifications are also offered where applicable. Training is typically held on-site at the company to allow maximum flexibility and access for the working adult.
  - Continuing educations such as HVAC, electrical contractor, journeyman, and master electrician, plumbing, and insurance. These classes enable working adults to retain their licenses. SCC Workforce Solutions also offers prep classes to assist adults working in the trades to obtain their license in that field, such as the Electrical Prep Course and the Plumbing Prep Course.
  - Research and development of new industry-driven programs to meet the needs of the business and industry in our area. SCC in partnership with different industry sectors has developed several new programs, providing additional opportunities for working adults to have high wage, high demand jobs. Some of those programs include:
    - Lineman Tech Center – This program has trained hundreds of students to become apprentice linemen. Student placement is over 85% in the industry. The demand for lineman is strong and the pay/benefits are very good. While this is a non-credit program, many students come back to college after obtaining employment to complete a credential.

- CDL-A program – This program was started in 2019 and offers a college credential. In less than 6 weeks, students earn a college credential, their CDLA License, and a good paying job.
- KY FAME program - The KY FAME program was started in 2015 at the request of the manufacturers in Pulaski County. This program is a work and learn program where students work 3+ days a week and go to school 2 days a week. In 5 semesters, they earn their AAS in Industrial Maintenance Technology, Advanced Manufacturing Technology degree, the Industrial Maintenance Technology Diploma, and 6 certificates. Students are employed while working and have jobs after graduation. Students can come out debt free from this and other programs at SCC thanks to programs like FAFSA, Work Ready Scholarship, academic scholarships, and tuition assistance by employers.
- Underground Utility Technician program and the Aboveground Utility Technician Program – These two new programs were started in 2021 at the request of the utility sector. The industry came to SCC to discuss the need for technicians to have additional training and the opportunity to obtain an associate degree. SCC worked with them to develop this program and received approval to award an AAS in Apprenticeship Studies for those students who complete the pathway.
- Additive Manufacturing Program – This certificate program enables students to design and print parts for every sector in business and industry. SCC created the certificate in additive manufacturing to be ahead of the curve in the technology and to support our local business and industry as they begin to shift to printing their own parts. The certificate consists of five classes, including design classes, individual hands-on projects and a business class with a focus on entrepreneurship.

**Narrative 4: Associates Degree or Higher:** To be recertified Work Ready, 27% of the population should have some college or a higher degree. (If you qualify for the exception outlined in the criteria, please explain so here). Please explain your county's plan of action to increase this level of attainment by 1% every three years. What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

SCC in partnership with several Kentucky four-year universities created the University Center of Southern Kentucky (UCSK), which is located on the Somerset North Campus. SCC has partnerships with University of Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Eastern Kentucky University, and Lindsey Wilson College. These partnerships allow Pulaski County residents to start their educational career at SCC and transfer to a four-year university without ever leaving Pulaski County. This allows more students the opportunity and access to obtaining their bachelor's degree. Below are some highlights regarding UCSK:

- UCSK and WKU have entered into a partnership to allow students to complete the first two years of their BA-Elementary Education with SCC and the last two years through WKU while on our campus. All services and student teaching will be local allowing students to complete their BS degree entirely in Pulaski County.
- As the recipient of a USDA Distance Learning grant that provides funds to purchase technology, this fall semester the University Center will be able to expand its reach to more area students. Utilizing this new technology, some UCSK program offerings will be extended to SCC's Laurel Campus and the college's four centers through web-based face-to-face classes. Up until now, UCSK services have only been available on SCC's Somerset Campus.
- Besides this extensive expansion of services, there will be several new degree options available as well. This fall, Western Kentucky University (WKU) will begin offering bachelor's degrees in Sociology, Criminology, and Management through UCSK. WKU will have an advisor in person available at each location for additional advising with students.
- Classes are available online or through a hybrid format which combines in-person and online course delivery. Students have access to WKU resources, including academic advising, admissions support, and financial aid counseling.
- Somerset Community College (SCC) and Western Kentucky University (WKU) recently signed transfer agreements for four academic programs to be offered in collaboration with the University Center of Southern Kentucky (UCSK). The transfer agreements include degree completion programs in Sociology, Criminology, SKYTeach Math, and Management with a Concentration in Business Administration.
- Several of our Nursing program graduates have been accepted to the University of Kentucky's Registered Nursing (RN) to Bachelor's Degree of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. They are choosing a completely online format so they can be working as an RN and continuing their education at the same time to earn the BSN. With the flexibility of online student support and classes, these students can certainly continue their education in these seemingly uncertain times.

(\*\*See attachment for all of the programs offered by the UCSK.)



**Narrative 5: Soft Skills Programs:** Discuss your programs that address work ethic/soft skills development and credentialing for both the secondary school and post-secondary adult populations. This includes the High School Work Ethic Seal, Kentucky Essential Skills Certificate, and any other supplemental programs for Career Readiness Certificates.

**The programs must meet the following minimum standards:**

- Provide evidence of employer engagement in the program development process, including representation of the county's most prolific business and industries,
- Provide evidence that employers recognize achievement of work ethic or soft skills credential in their hiring/advancement processes,
- Programs must include measurable goals for annual improvement in the raw number and percentage of workforce credentialed,
- Plans must include a strategy to assure employers of the sustainability of the programs, and
- Programs must address, at a minimum, the following topical areas:
- Attendance/punctuality, communication, teamwork, leadership and critical thinking.

Developing our workforce is crucial to economic growth. SPEDA has a great interest in helping educate and train skilled employees to ensure businesses have the manpower they need to be successful.

- SPEDA is the Program Sponsor for the Work Ethics Seal Program. Somerset Independent Schools and Pulaski County Schools just held the annual Work Ethics Seal Luncheon. Through these 3 local high schools 111 Juniors and 91 Seniors participated in the program for 2021/2022 school year. Local industrial companies had information booths set up for the students to visit before and after the luncheon.
- SPEDA has partnered with Somerset Community College and the Pulaski Co Detention Center to prepare inmates for re-entering the workforce with soft-skills training and reward their efforts to learn important job skills with good time served.
- SPEDA also partnered with Somerset Community College's Workforce Solutions Program to provide free employee training opportunities. A four-session soft-skills training covered important interpersonal skills – communication, team-building, problem-solving, leadership and work ethic.
- SPEDA has partnered with Lake Cumberland Tourism to offer free Hospitality Training for our local businesses. The training focuses on the basics of excellent customer service while teaching employees how to direct visitors to community events and attractions. The course covers telephone etiquette, verbal and non-verbal communication, dealing with difficult customers, e-mail and social media etiquette, dressing for success and knowing the community.

**Narrative 6: Work Based Learning Opportunities:** Explain what Work Based Learning Opportunities (apprenticeships, internships, co-ops, etc.) are available in your county. How are these opportunities promoted? What plans do you have to increase these opportunities? What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome these challenges?

SPEDA is constantly recruiting local manufactures to participate in the Apprenticeship and KY Fame Program. SPEDA promotes these programs through our Industrial Leaders Breakfast, our website and social media.

- SPEDA hosts a quarterly Industrial Leaders Breakfast comprised of local industrial leaders to learn about various programs and issues facing their businesses. One presentation was from the Kentucky Chamber President to discuss Kentucky's and Pulaski County's workforce participation and initiatives to improve the issues.
- Somerset Community College has designed services and training opportunities to increase economic development in our regions. From industrial maintenance, lineman training and team building to computer robotics instruction and continuing education for those licensed in technical careers. They provide excellent training services to all employees of all trades to upgrade their skills.
- The Apprenticeship Program at Somerset Community College is leading the way in preparing Kentucky's workers to compete in today's economy. Apprenticeship programs keep pace with advancing technologies and innovations in training and human resource development through the complete involvement of employers in the educational process. While it is used in traditional industries such as construction and manufacturing, apprenticeship is also instrumental for training and development in growing industries, such as health care, information technology, transportation and logistics, and energy.
- The KY FAME AMT program at Somerset Community College combines college coursework with paid, on-the-job training and experience, as well as personal behaviors and core manufacturing skills desired by manufacturers. Every year, SCC prepares students to go pro in high paying, in-demand careers in advanced manufacturing that lead to a better life. Because SCC aligns its programs with local business needs, students are prepared to walk out of college and into a high-paying career. At the end of the program, students participate in the Kentucky Manufacturing Going Pro Signing Day, a celebration for new hires in advanced manufacturing and the companies they will represent. Five Pulaski County companies attended the signing day event in 2019. During the past five years, 30 students have graduated from the KY FAME program.
- SPEDA also partners with Somerset Community College, with the Lake Cumberland Regional Training Consortium. This is an employer-led association that provides high-quality, inexpensive training to its members. The Lake Cumberland Regional Training Consortium (LCRTC) offers a variety of courses in leadership, team building, customer service, information technology and safety, helping employees of member businesses improve their skills and offering networking opportunities for those companies that choose to join.

In addition to the various programs already listed, we are constantly working with the Pulaski County Detention Center to prepare inmates for the workforce upon their release. SPEDA instituted a "soft skills" training within the detention center and recently purchased a 6,000 square foot facility for the jail to utilize in partnership with Somerset Community College to train

the inmates on the site of the detention center in various skilled labor such as HVAC, plumbing, construction, welding and other similar endeavors.

SPEDA's President & CEO Chris Girdler sits on Somerset High School's Career and Technical Advisory Council. The group coordinates efforts between the high school and the employers throughout the community.

SPEDA has recently increased the EDA's participation in the Work Ethic Seal Luncheon bringing in highly motivational speakers for an annual luncheon recognizing the high school graduates who will receive the seal.

In addition, SPEDA is coordinating a "Bus to Biz" initiative taking teachers and counselors from our local middle and high schools to the places of employment for tours, presentations as part of their professional development training. This ensures a direct connection between our educators and some of the great job opportunities that exist within Somerset and Pulaski County.

The challenge of addressing the workforce issues is a nationwide problem and one that has become a cultural issue where a strong work ethic is not viewed in as much of a respectful and admirable way as in decades past. This has to change in our opinion and continuing our efforts will help in this process.

**Narrative 7: Broadband Availability:**

Please explain your county's plan of action to get internet availability to the necessary percentage of the population (60% for rural counties, 90% for urban counties). What challenges, if any, do you expect and how can you overcome those challenges?

Pulaski County has 100% internet availability to all its urban and rural communities. We are continuing our effort to connect these areas and businesses to high-speed internet.

**Narrative 8: Engagement of Underserved Populations:** Please discuss how your community has executed your plan to provide employment & engagement opportunities to individuals in the underserved categories (Disabilities, veterans, ex-offenders, foster youth, youth and young adults, recovery, homeless, unemployed, underemployed, and foreign-born). Plan should address potential barriers such as childcare, health, housing and transportation that may exist.

Developing our workforce is crucial to economic growth. SPEDA has a great interest in helping educate and train skilled employees to ensure businesses have the manpower they need to be successful.

- SPEDA has worked with Somerset Community College and the Pulaski Co Detention Center to expand the inmate training program – CRITICAL Program. The program is providing soft-skills training to those re-entering the workforce after release. They also will begin additional curriculum to provide technical training to learn a specific industry skill. Welding, Industrial maintenance, concrete finishing or information technology are a few of the programs offered. Partnering with local manufacturing businesses the in-

mates will be hired after release. The first class of 8 male inmates graduated from the welding program in September 2021, the second class of 7 graduated in May 2022. The first female welding class of 4 graduated in October 2021. A local manufacturing company has hired all 7 men from the second class 1 from the first class and all are either working as welders or in the assembly department. 2 of the women are also employed by this company and working as welders. They all completed these programs while still incarcerated.

- SPEDA is partnering with the Cumberland workforce Development to implement the KARES (Kentucky Area Resources) program that will assist those in our communities seeking the help they need.
- Each summer, SPEDA has a local high school graduate intern in our office. The internship program through the Kentucky Career Center - Cumberland Work Experience Program give students a chance to work in a field in which they have an interest in pursuing for their future. He or she assembles a group of recent high school graduates to discuss what they're looking for in choosing a community in which to live. The goal for SPEDA is to take this feedback and create programs and initiatives that will encourage students to stay in or move back to Somerset-Pulaski County. Interns then submit a report about what they learned from the group. SPEDA is planning for our community's future and preparing for its next generation of leaders and citizens.
- Somerset Community College has a child care assistance program or CCAMPIS (Child Care Access Means Parents in School Program). This is a federally funded program that allows SCC to support student-parents in starting and completing their post-secondary education by providing child care subsidies to qualified students.

As discussed in Narrative #6, we are constantly working with the Pulaski County Detention Center to prepare inmates for the workforce upon their release. SPEDA instituted a "soft skills" training within the detention center and recently purchased a 6,000 square foot facility for the jail to utilize in partnership with Somerset Community College to train the inmates on the site of the detention center in various skilled labor such as HVAC, plumbing, construction, welding and other similar endeavors.

SPEDA also worked with Gods Food Pantry in the Somerset and Pulaski County area to sell them a large warehouse space at a drastically reduced cost to allow them to expand and further meet the needs of our communities underserved and downtrodden. This facility, which spans approximately 6 acres and over 100,000 square feet, will now be converted to a new facility named "OakPointe Centre".

SPEDA has partnered with the City of Somerset to bring the KARES program into our community. KARES or also known as "Kentucky Area Resources" serves as an online list of resources in Somerset and Pulaski County that can help a person quickly located and contact organizations to helping in a variety of subjects. This is in partnership with Cumberland Workforce Development Board and the Lake Cumberland Area Development District.

**Narrative 9: Workforce Supply vs. Demand:** Please identify the top five occupational needs for each KWIB sector that are required currently and over the next five years. Discuss how your community works with your local workforce board to review and subsequently analyze occupational demand (by industry sector) in order to Develop a system that supplies industry with the talent pipeline needed for a thriving business environment. You should also explain how your community is working with educational partners to fill those needs.

Currently, there isn't a job that is not in high demand in Somerset and Pulaski County. As reflected nationwide, there is a shortage in positions filled from retail, food service, heavy manufacturing, agriculture, heavy equipment operations, hospitality, and many other various sectors.

SPEDA and our community has undertaken a wide swath of efforts that has been detailed throughout this report. We have partnered with all of our K-12 educational systems, both public and private as well as Somerset Community College, Campbellsville University, Eastern Kentucky University, and the University of Kentucky.

Communication between private sector employers and our educational system along with our governmental leaders is the key to success. SPEDA has implemented a litany of programs, regular meetings, gatherings and social media campaigns to ensure there is good communication throughout and we are seeing unprecedented collaboration throughout our community.



## PCHS graduates celebrate ‘achievements and triumphs’

BY CARLA SLAVEY

COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

It was a unique graduation for a unique class of Maroons.

In the Saturday morning ceremony both Class President Parker Sellers and school Counselor Kathryn Claiborne pointed out that the students in the Pulaski County High School Class of 2022 achieved the goal of graduation despite going through the COVID-19 pandemic as well.

“Just yesterday it feels like we were walking in these doors as freshmen. We survived a pandemic and high school together, two major accomplishments,” Sellers told his fellow graduates.

Claiborne said that those who had earned their diplomas, those who graduated with advanced diplomas and those who had graduated with distinction did so while having to attend classes virtually, many over the course of two school years.

While Saturday was the closing of that chapter, Sellers reminded his classmates that it was a day of celebration.

“Today is not a day to be sad, though. It’s just

the beginning of a lifetime of success and happiness. One season of our lives closed, and another season begins. We have been equipped by our school for our future.”

And as for the school itself, Sellers made his feelings known about how he felt graduating from PCHS versus the other options for public education in the county.

“Thank you God for making us Maroons and not one of the other two. Hallelujah!” he said to a round of cheers and applause.

Principal Rodney McAninch, himself a PCHS graduate (of the class of 1992), told the group how proud he was seeing them make it to graduation, dealing with the challenges and struggles,

SEE PCHS, A5

‘Today is not a day to be sad, though. It’s just the beginning of a lifetime of success and happiness.

One season of our lives closed, and another season begins. We have been equipped by our school for

our future.’

**Parker Sellers**



**The graduates of PCHS’s Class of 2022 celebrated at the end of their Saturday morning ceremony.**

CARLA SLAVEY | CJ

---

**PCHS:** Maroons celebrate Class of ‘22’s accomplishments

From Page A1

but also accomplishing great achievements and triumphs.

“I want you to turn to look around this gym, and I hope you see the people in the bleachers, the families, the friend that have been with you along the way,” he told the students.

and around 57 earned their Advanced Diplomas.

Claiborne said the students had also been awarded “millions of dollars” in scholarships.

“You have persevered and kept moving forward toward that goal of a diploma, and along the way you’ve made some of the very best friends that you’ll ever have, [and] have had experiences that you will remember fondly all of your lives,” McAninch said.

He also pointed out that the students have had mountains of support in the form of those who turned out to the PCHS gym to watch them pick up that diploma.

“I hope that you can feel the pride and the joy that they have as they watch this milestone in your lives.

Getting to be up here on this stage is a privilege, and each year I get to see in their faces the happiness and the love that they have for you.”

A total of 267 students walked across the stage to accept their high school degrees – most carrying cans of soda that were handed to administrators and dutifully placed in a cooler.

For the PCHS class of 2022, 32 students graduated with High Distinction, 61 graduated with Distinction,

For those who want to view the video of PCHS’s graduation ceremony, it can be found at the Pulaski County Schools YouTube channel at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p1AHW\\_93CM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p1AHW_93CM).



## SHS offers harmonious tribute to Class of '22

**BY CHRISTOPHER HARRIS**

COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

James Sayers played the National Anthem on the trombone. Lucy McArthur performed a solo on the violin. Logan Purcell serenaded the senior class with “I Hope You Dance” via his voice and the guitar.

But most instrumental of all to Friday night’s commencement ceremony for the Class of 2022 at Somerset High School were the relationships they formed — with each other, with their teachers, and with principal Jeff Wesley.

In particular, Wesley — closing out his third year as principal of his alma mater — seemed particularly affected by this graduating class in his comments outside at Clark Field beneath the setting sun Friday.

“The collective character of your class is amazing,” Wesley told the students in front of him. “You all make the people around you feel better about themselves. I think of examples such as those of you who took the time to hand-write notes on notebook paper to express your feelings and gratitude. ... Every note and card is unfolded and lying on my desk right now for me to read again and again next week.

“You have rallied around one another when you experienced loss, pain and uncertainty. You are funny, genuine and kind in your interactions.

You set the tone for what school should look like in so many regards,” he added. “If the Class of 2022 were a person, I would want that person to be one of my best friends.”

McArthur, the Senior Class President, was one of three student speakers on the evening, in addition to her performance of “Meditation” from the opera “Thais” by Jules Massenet. She talked about the warmth she received coming to Somerset from having previously been a homeschooler, and

**SEE SHS, A5**

‘The collective character of your class is amazing. You all make the people around you feel better about themselves. I think of examples such as those of you who took the time to hand-write notes on notebook paper to express your feelings and gratitude.’

**Jeff Wesley**



**Lucy McArthur, Senior Class President, played “Meditation” from the opera “Thais” on the violin at Friday’s graduation ceremony for Somerset High School’s Class of 2022.**

CHRISTOPHER HARRIS | CJ

---

**SHS:** City school bids farewell to graduating seniors at Clark Field

us that all we have to decide is what to do with the time that’s given us. Seniors, you may be thinking that

opportunities for success because of the constant support from SHS. This leaves me with options. This

From Page A1

also how she had once upon a time planned to deliver “the grandest, most extraordinary, life-changing speech in world history” if she ever spoke at graduation, hoping to talk about her generation had the calling to bring about world peace.

“No, we ‘22ers have not quite figured out the whole ‘world peace’ thing. Maybe we could if we just had a little more time,” she said.

“Now here I am, standing in front of this sea of purple and gold, and much to the disappointment of my seventhgrade self, I will not be speaking about the ... things that I always imagined. Instead, I would like to offer you a simple, almost quiet message on something quite different and probably unexpected: I’d like to talk about the ordinary.”

That included congratulating parents on nurturing their children to help them get to this point, thanking the teachers for seeing the class at their best and worst and helping them along the way, and observing to her fellow classmates that perhaps pursuit of the extraordinary has overshadowed appreciation of the ordinary.

“Our tendency to prove it with a picture, to see and be seen, to somehow validate that we are here has maybe our crowded our ability to see the beauty of simple, everyday things, like hugging your grandma and grandpa after you finish your game, meet or match; recalling how hard you worked for that A; getting that genuine smile from the freshman who really needed your expression of kindness the first week of school; taking a moment to watch the sun set over the treeline on a Sunday evening,” she said.

time has passed you by during these coming-of-age years, but oh, is it just beginning.”

Other speakers from the class were Luke Godsey and Caroline Blakeman. Godsey talked about being welcomed to Somerset as a former Science Hill student, and although he often felt isolated as a freshman, those feelings went away with time.

“This school has a special way of including every student, even in the seemingly most minute way possible,” he said. “There are still moments when I get emotional over how inclusive my peers are.

The feeling I got when all the powder puff girls cheered me on when I showed up with pompoms to be a cheerleader ... I remember going home with such a warm and beautiful feeling.

Even the students in the stands cheered me on as I did toe-touches in a pair of blue jeans.

... As the years went by though, I’ve been able to find my place in this school and as a person. My peers have taught me self-worth and how to love myself.”

Blakeman thanked her fellow students for helping her grow and change and learn both about herself and everyone else. She also talked about how SHS provided her with a plethora of resources to succeed in whatever she does in life — though, she noted, not everyone knows at this point what that might be for themselves.

“Many people gathered here today may have plans for what they want their future to look like,” she said.

“I don’t want to lick all the red off your sucker, but for the majority of us, we have no clue what we’re

leaves all of us with options. ... So don’t start freaking out just yet. You have time. We all have time. ... Your parents, my parents, our teachers, most people around us are still trying to figure it out. Don’t allow this milestone to force you to grow up so quickly.”

In all, the SHS Class of 2022 has been awarded \$1,966,042.80 in academic, athletic and other scholarship monies. Students from this class will be attending 21 different colleges and universities. In the program, 129 students were listed as being seniors in the Class of 2022.

Recipients of the prestigious Carnegie Diploma, requiring a rigorous load of Advanced Placement and dualcredit classes, included Blakeman, Godsey, Tori Ellen Smith and Emily Rae Ham. Ten students, including those mentioned as well as Abbogail Edwards, Madison King, Logan Purcell, Thomas Reynolds, Syndey Rogers. and Rachel Tomlinson, graduated Summa Cum Laude, with a 4.0 GPA and minimum six credits of AP or dual-credit.

Elaina Grace Bennett was a Rogers’ Scholar, McArthur attended the Governor’s School for the Arts, and Blakeman, Godsey, Ham, Reynolds and Smith with Governor’s Scholars recipients.

Watch the ceremony on YouTube online at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRHOoG0ud\\_TkT3wU27wa75Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRHOoG0ud_TkT3wU27wa75Q)

“In ‘Lord of the Rings,’ J.R.R. Tolkien reminds

doing. ... At some point, we have to face the question that is, ‘What’s next?’ ... Although I don’t have a clue what I plan on doing with my life, I have multiple

---

[Copyright \(c\)2022 Somerset Commonwealth Journal, Edition 5/24/2022](#)  
[Powered by TECNAVIA](#)

---

## Southwestern High School graduates 298 in Class of 2022

BY JANIE SLAVEN

COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

Nearly 300 new graduates crossed the stage at Friday's commencement ceremony for Southwestern High School. The commencement address was delivered by class president Ashtyn Hines. Without the time to share her memories of all her fellow graduates, Hines instead urged them to dream big — sharing quotes for United States Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the late Apple guru Steve Jobs, and actress Mindy Kaling.

“As I look around this room tonight, I see a room full of capable individuals,” she said. “I see 298 people with the utmost potential to be anything that they set their minds to.”

More important than their current circumstances, Hines continued, are the choices the graduates will make from here on out.

“You only truly need one person to believe in you,” she said, “and that person is you. You must be your biggest supporter. You must be your biggest motivator. You must push yourself to be the best possible version of yourself. If you truly want to achieve greatness, the only person who can stop you is yourself.”

In closing, Hines also told her classmates to write their own success stories, pursue the goals that are meaningful to them rather than others, and make a difference when they can.

“No one gets to decide what we do with our lives or what we become,” she said. “...I ask of you to simply follow your heart and allow it to lead you somewhere beautiful.”

Prior to handing out diplomas, the administrative staff — led by Principal Mark Hargis — recognized the graduates who would be going into the military or attending college.

SEE SWHS, A5

‘You only truly need one person to believe in you, and that person is you. You must be your biggest motivator. You must push yourself to be the best possible version of yourself. If you truly want to achieve greatness, the only person who can stop you is yourself.’

**Ashtyn Hines**



**Senior Class President Ashtyn Hines delivers the commencement address Friday for Southwestern High School's Class of 2022.**

CALEB LOWNDES | CJ

---

**SWHS:** Nearly 300 in Class of 2022

From Page A1

was offered \$5,345,900 in scholarships and accepted \$3,699,700. Counselor Doug Grider recognized the seniors graduating with High Distinction, meaning they must complete the

To accommodate family and friends who were unable to attend in person, the ceremony was livestreamed. The graduation video can be viewed on Pulaski County Schools' YouTube page at



Assistant Principal (and Air Force veteran) Tony Cress announced the following military enlistments: Lucas Puckett into the Marine Corps, Vanessa Cortez into the Army and Benjamin Janson into the Army National Guard. “To you who have elected to serve our country in military service, we owe a great debt of gratitude,” Cress said, asking the audience to stand in recognition of their service to our country.

Counselor John Hargis presented the graduates who will be pursuing postsecondary degrees at several colleges and universities, noting that the Class of 2022

requirements for an advanced diploma with a cumulative GPA (grade point average) of at least 4.0: Matthew Hall, Trevor Hansen, Ashtyn Hines, Kate Hutchinson, Laryssa King, Trinity Melton, Veer Patel, Xavier Roysdon, Laci Russell, Cierra Truett, Kaylie Tudor, Sarah Wilson, and Bryan Whitson.

Following the presentation of diplomas by Pulaski Schools Superintendent Patrick Richardson, Board of Education Chair Cindy Price issued the confirmation of graduation as the new graduates tossed their caps into the air.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMnFPwyDeow>.

# SPEDA, detention center to bring soft-skills training to inmates

[somersetkyleads.com/speda-partners-with-detention-center-to-bring-soft-skills-training-to-inmates/](https://somersetkyleads.com/speda-partners-with-detention-center-to-bring-soft-skills-training-to-inmates/)

August 15, 2019



A new partnership between the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA), the Pulaski County Detention Center and Somerset Community College will better prepare inmates for re-entering the workforce with soft-skills training and reward their efforts to learn important job skills with good time served.

With an agreement signed today, SPEDA will financially support bringing soft skills training curriculum developed by human behavior and organization dynamics expert Greg Coker to inmates at the detention center. Coker, a resident of Harrodsburg, Kentucky, provides coaching and training programs that focus on purpose and engagement as a catalyst for personal transformation. Coker's clients include educational institutions, business and industry, correctional facilities and high-performance individuals.

"Pulaski Jailer Anthony McCollum is doing outstanding work and he is passionate about helping those incarcerated prepare themselves for the workforce upon release," SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said.

Coker's Soft Skills Bootcamp, Re-Entry Edition offers each inmate an easy-to-read field manual that includes models and battle-tested wisdom while teaching important interpersonal skills — communication, team-building, problem-solving, leadership and work

ethic — vital to successful collaboration in the workplace. Most chapters include questions for consideration and suggestions for action.

Any inmate who completes the program is eligible to receive 30 days off his or her sentence. The hope is inmates are better equipped to re-enter the workforce and prosper, Girdler said.

Coker says his re-entry curriculum is built off a common theme: People who buy on emotion and justify with facts.

“Ex-offenders are not going to be hired based on the facts,” Coker said. “Employers are naturally and historically apprehensive about hiring someone with a criminal background. But, if an ex-offender can connect emotionally and in a deep and visceral way, employers will find a way to make employment a possibility. We make these connections a reality.”

McCollum believes this re-entry program will serve as a model for other communities.

“People will look at Pulaski County and say, ‘They have it going in the right direction,’” McCollum said. “The Pulaski County Detention Center is honored to be a partner in this endeavor. We are committed to improving the workforce in Pulaski County and the lives of inmates.”

Girdler said SPEDA is actively looking for ways to integrate technical training and job search opportunities to inmates as well. Somerset Community College’s workforce development program will be involved in implementing these programs at the detention center in the future.

“I’m proud that Somerset Community College is collaborating with SPEDA, the Pulaski County Detention Center and Greg Coker Development to create a program in Pulaski County that helps minimize recidivism, provides both soft and technical skills training to incarcerated residents, and provides a new workforce source for our local community, business and industry,” said Carey Castle, president and CEO of SCC. “Education can be a gateway to social and economic mobility and education can improve outcomes from one generation to the next.”

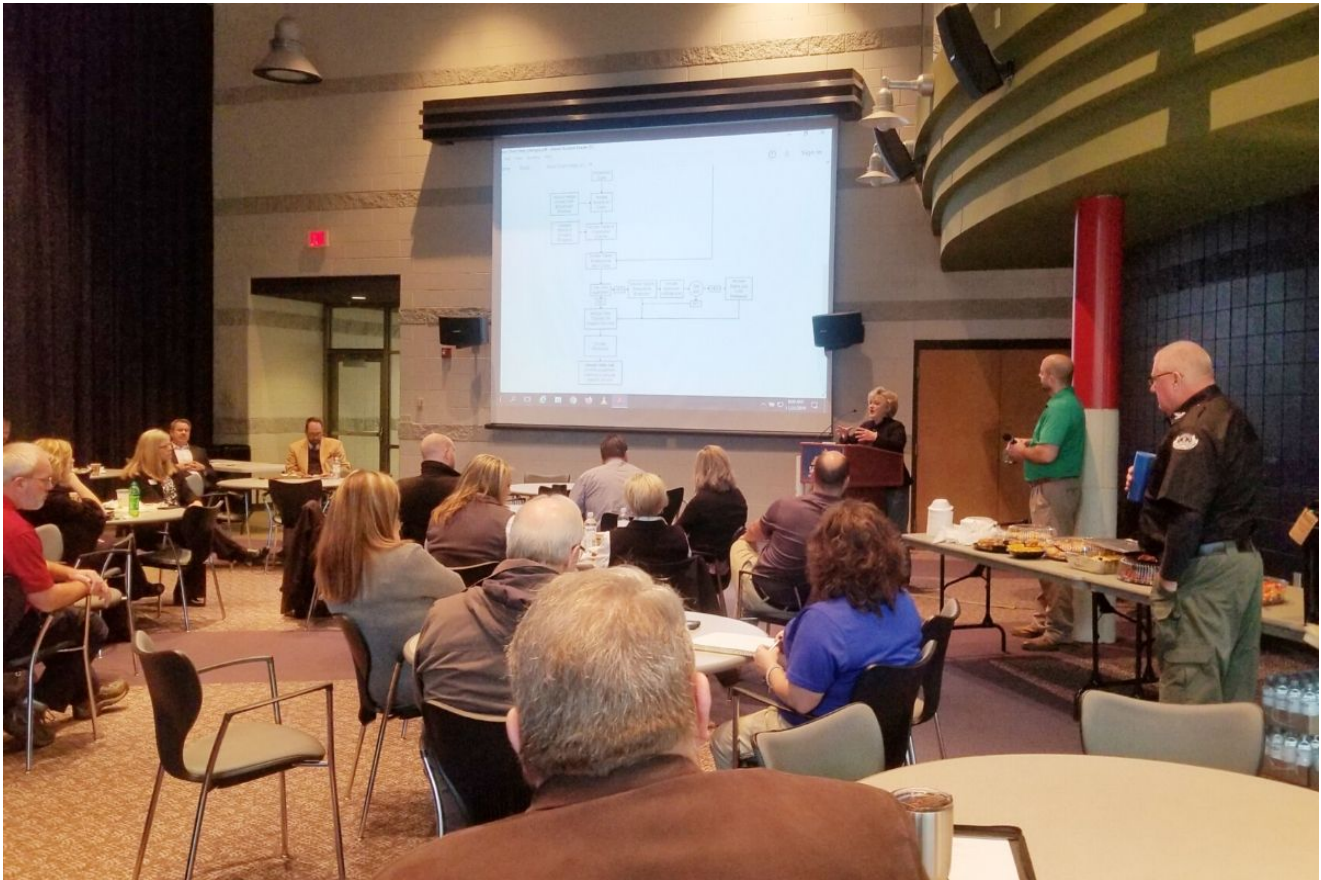
Supporting programs like these are crucial to supporting the community, Girdler said.

“We owe it to society to help with inmate re-entry and helping to turn around the lives of our fellow citizens,” he said.

# SPEDA announces expansion of inmate training program

[somersetkyleads.com/speda-announces-expansion-of-inmate-training-program/](https://somersetkyleads.com/speda-announces-expansion-of-inmate-training-program/)

November 22, 2019



*CRITICAL will provide soft-skills, technical training to inmates and help them navigate the job application process*

The Somerset-Pulaski County Economic Development Authority (SPEDA) introduced industrial leaders to an evolving initiative Thursday to grow Pulaski County’s workforce while also helping incarcerated men and women gain a new start on life when they are released.

During the second installment of SPEDA’s Industrial Leaders Breakfast series, more than 50 leaders representing 26 Pulaski County businesses listened as those involved in implementing the CRITICAL program — Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Inmates Transforming Individuals, Community and Livelihoods — described its purpose and encouraged local businesses to participate.

This three-phase program will offer soft skills and technical training to inmates at the Pulaski County Detention Center, while also creating a transformational center inside the jail where employees can learn about job opportunities available and interview.



Inmates who complete the program will receive 30 days off time served. And by being better prepared to reenter the workforce, they are less likely to return to jail, SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said.

“We must do our best to help those incarcerated,” Girdler said. “This is a pool for our workforce. Where else can you go to get a built-in pool of employees to train, while also making a difference in their lives?”

Pulaski County Jailer Anthony McCollum told the crowd that Pulaski County has one of the two most overcrowded jails in the state. In lieu of building a new jail that would be costly to taxpayers, he began to look for alternatives.

“I got to thinking, there has to be more that we can do,” McCollum said. “Working together as a community, we can solve problems. I knew as a community if we bonded together, we could figure it out.”

It wasn't long before Girdler approached him about partnering on this project. “I said, ‘You know, that's exactly what I've been looking for,’” McCollum said.

The initiative began in August by implementing soft-skills training at the jail. The curriculum, developed by human behavior and organization dynamics expert Greg Coker, teaches inmates important interpersonal skills — communication, team-building, problem-solving, leadership and work ethic — vital to successful collaboration in the workplace.

But Girdler, McCollum, and Somerset Community College (SCC) Vice President of Workforce Solutions Alesa Johnson have had plans to expand the program from the beginning.

Johnson explained to the group the pathway inmates in the CRITICAL program will take. It begins with the already existing soft-skills training. Once an inmate starts that curriculum, then CRITICAL leaders will determine if that inmate also needs technical training to learn a specific industry skill. Welding, industrial maintenance, concrete finishing or information technology are examples of these types of training, Johnson said. If the answer is yes, the inmate will meet with an adviser and begin a college course track to earn the appropriate certification. If the answer is no, the inmate will instead take professional skills courses to further prepare them for job interviews.

After these two phases are complete an adviser will send the inmate's resumé to potential employers. The inmate will interview until hired and will begin working until his or her release. If jobs are not immediately available, CRITICAL will provide training for the inmate on support services so he or she is successful in getting a job after release.

Knowing what types of jobs might be available is vital to this program's success, Johnson said.

“We’re asking you, do you support this as a community?” Johnson said. “We feel very strongly that we want to give people that we can a second chance. ... We’ve got to find out who is willing to work as a partner with us, and then we want your feedback on if there are jobs that they can do and offer those to the inmates.”

Johnson has applied for a \$300,000 Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) innovation grant to help kick-start the program. If awarded, funding will help provide advisers and coaches, transportation, and construction trade classes, Johnson said.

Partnerships are already being created with educational institutions to expand the program, including Eastern Kentucky University, which is one of only 26 sites across the country that is an authorized Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) education institute. EKU is already working with federal prisons in McCreary County and Manchester, where 35 to 40 inmates a month are exiting these prisons through a similar program.

“It’s extremely important for your employees to be safe and to know safety in every aspect,” said Mardi Montgomery, senior executive director of workforce development for EKU. “EKU is extremely willing to come and partner. We want to see this happen in this community and replicate it in other communities.”

In addition to the soft-skills curriculum used at the jail, Coker provides coaching and training programs that focus on purpose and engagement as a catalyst for personal transformation. He told the group that Somerset has the opportunity to be a model for Kentucky and the nation by implementing this program.

“With the reentry program we’re talking about, there are a lot of women and men who look a lot like you and me,” Coker said. “There’s a lot of them out there that have the skills, talents, desire and motivation that you and I do to get employed. If we don’t hire them in six months, guess what? The odds of them going back are pretty high.”

Johnson, McCollum and Girdler encouraged businesses to consider being a partner in the program to offer jobs to inmates who complete the program. For more information about CRITICAL or how to get involved, contact Johnson at [alesa.johnson@kctcs.edu](mailto:alesa.johnson@kctcs.edu) or Girdler at [chris@speda.org](mailto:chris@speda.org).

# SPEDA hosts first hospitality training series

[somersetkyleads.com/speda-hosts-first-hospitality-training-series/](https://somersetkyleads.com/speda-hosts-first-hospitality-training-series/)

July 29, 2020



SPEDA hosted its first free hospitality training series July 21 and 23, focusing on the basics of excellent customer service while teaching employees how to direct visitors to community events and attractions.

Taught by Lake Cumberland Tourism Executive Director Michelle Allen and Thoroughbred Hospitality Group Director of Sales JaKaye Garth, the course covered telephone etiquette, verbal and non-verbal communication, dealing with difficult customers, e-mail and social media etiquette, dressing for success and knowing the community.

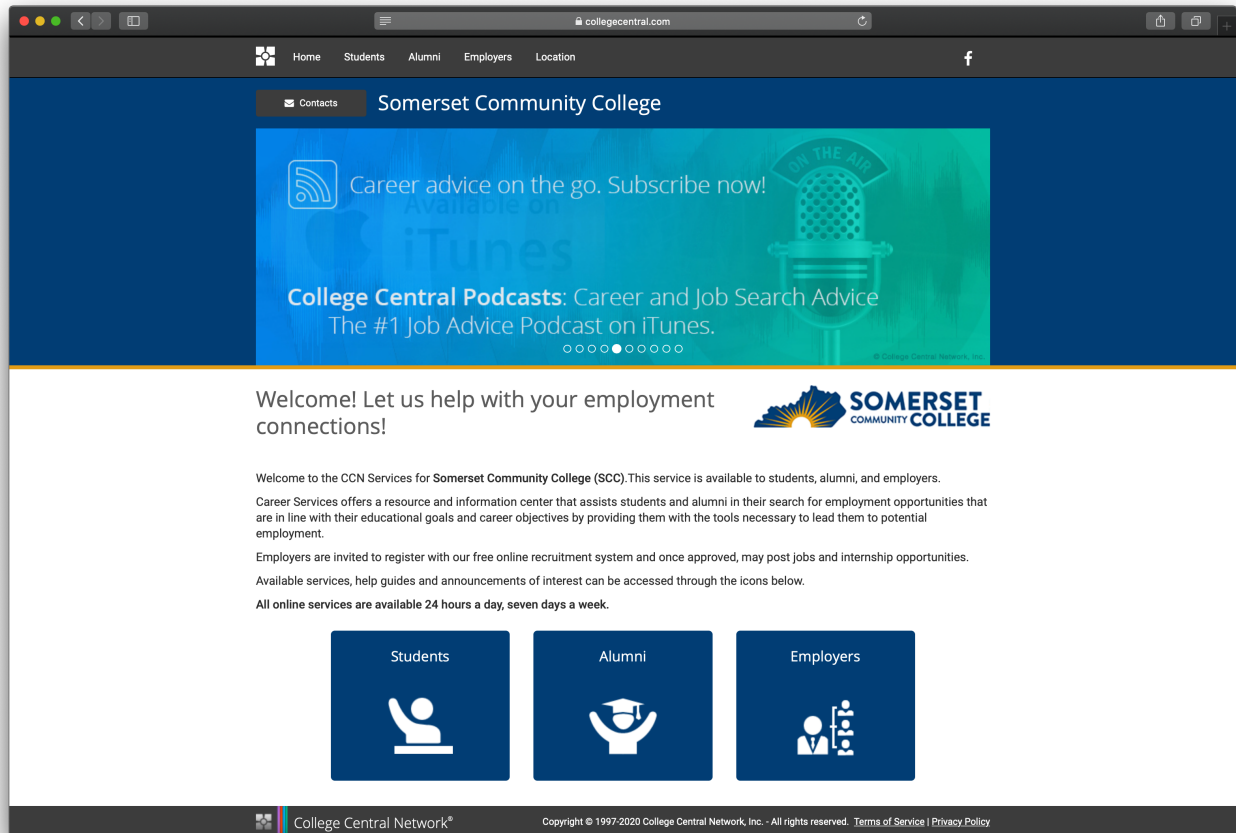
The training was targeted to front-line employees — those who work in hotel lobbies, retail, dining establishments, convenience stores or other positions that interact directly with visitors. The group discussed how to tailor customer service to each individual visitor to give them the best experience possible.

Tourism is Pulaski County's No. 1 industry, generating more than \$119 million in revenue and drawing 4 million recreational visitors a year. Because of this, SPEDA put a high priority in its first year on offering this training, so the community can provide the best customer service possible to the people who fuel this important economic driver.

# Looking for an employee or intern? Try SCC's online job portal

> [somersetkyleads.com/looking-for-an-employee-or-intern-try-sccs-online-job-portal/](https://somersetkyleads.com/looking-for-an-employee-or-intern-try-sccs-online-job-portal/)

July 30, 2020



Local businesses looking for employees and interns have another option for advertising positions and finding students or graduates who might be a good fit — Somerset Community College's online job board.

As part of its career services program, SCC offers a free online recruitment system for employers to post available jobs and internships and search student and alumni resumes and portfolios. Likewise, students and alumni can log in to search for available opportunities in their field of study.

The portal was designed by College Central Network and can be accessed here: <https://www.collegecentral.com/somersetcc/>

Employers must register and be approved in order to post jobs and conduct resume searches. An email address is required to register. Once on the College Central webpage, complete the following steps:



- Select the Employers icon.
- Click on the “Create Account” link.
- Complete the registration form and then register.
- Once approved, you will receive an email notification confirming your access in order to activate your account and establish your password.

For more information about this service, call Melissa Winstead, SCC career counselor and student ambassador coordinator, at (606) 451-6657 or email her at [melissa.winstead@kctcs.edu](mailto:melissa.winstead@kctcs.edu).

# Employer-led consortium will offer high-quality, affordable training to local businesses

> [somersetkyleads.com/employer-led-consortium-will-offer-high-quality-affordable-training-to-local-businesses/](https://somersetkyleads.com/employer-led-consortium-will-offer-high-quality-affordable-training-to-local-businesses/)

October 14, 2020



## ***Members will have access to a variety of courses for employees***

Through a new partnership with Somerset Community College (SCC), the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA) is reviving an employer-led association that provides high-quality, inexpensive training to its members.

The Lake Cumberland Regional Training Consortium (LCRTC) offers a variety of courses in leadership, team building, customer service, information technology and safety, helping employees of member businesses improve their skills and offering networking opportunities for those companies that choose to join. Becoming a member also provides employers with 50 points toward their Bluegrass State Skills Grant application, which offers reimbursements for worker training at Kentucky's new and expanding companies and for skills and occupational upgrade training for workers of Kentucky's existing companies.

“The education we provide, the skills we teach and the way we treat those who choose to open their doors here are crucial in retaining and recruiting employees and businesses,” SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said. “SPEDA is involved in every turn at making sure processes are in place to grow a strong workforce, and training is a crucial part of that. SPEDA CAO Jessica Carlton has overseen the creation of the consortium and will lead the initiative for our organization. We want our employers, and their employees, to feel they have the training resources they need to be successful.”

Membership to the consortium is \$100 per year for an organization, and any employee of that organization is eligible to participate in training sessions. The typical cost per participant for each class is between \$25 to \$40, depending upon the materials required for the course.

Members of the consortium will complete a training list survey annually, the results of which determine the top 12 training classes that will be presented to the membership for approval. Once approved, those 12 classes — one class per month — will be offered for the upcoming year. Topics range from correcting performance problems, generational communications, workplace professionalism, business writing skills and dealing with difficult customers, to how to use Microsoft Word and Photoshop 7 and how to perform CPR.

Class sizes will be limited to 20 to 25 participants, and there is a five participant minimum for each class to be offered. A company can typically register up to five participants, but after the deadline has passed and if additional seats are still available, then a company can request and pay to send additional participants. Classes are offered at the Somerset Community College main campus. However, if a situation arises where there is only one company that has signed up for a class and they meet the minimum number of participants (five), then the class can be held at that company.

That the consortium is employer-led and employers have the opportunity to choose training topics is what makes this consortium unique, said Alesa Johnson, SCC’s vice president for workforce solutions.

“Somerset Community College is proud to partner with SPEDA and our regional employers to build a highly-skilled workforce,” Johnson said. “This training consortium is a great opportunity for all employers, regardless of size, to get the quality skills training their employees need at a very reasonable price.”

Lorrie West, HR complex manager for Cobb-Vantress Inc., said the consortium has been a great resource in the past for her company.

“The Lake Cumberland Regional Training Consortium has proven to be invaluable to Cobb-Vantress over the past years in assisting our company with a variety of training needs for our front line supervisors, hourly team members and managers,” West said. “The classes offered are professional and economical.”

To join, download the LCRTC membership form and submit to Jessica Carlton at SPEDA at the address or email on the form. Once completed, membership dues can be submitted to Carlton at the address on the form or by calling (606) 425-5409 for credit card payment.

The consortium membership meets monthly, and the next meeting will be 9 a.m. Oct. 22. Board officers will be elected and the 12-course training schedule for 2020-21 will be presented for approval.



# Graduates value close-knit atmosphere, seek more job opportunities

---

 [somersetkyleads.com/graduates-value-close-knit-atmosphere-seek-more-job-opportunities/](https://somersetkyleads.com/graduates-value-close-knit-atmosphere-seek-more-job-opportunities/)

August 13, 2020

*SPEDA focus group offers insight into what will bring students home after college*

Maintaining a sense of family, continuing to embrace tourism, arts and entertainment, and recruiting more internships and better job opportunities are at the top of the wish list for recent high school graduates considering whether to move back to Pulaski County after college.

As part of her flagship project for the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA), summer intern Devan Neely, a 2020 graduate of Somerset High School, assembled a group of six fellow graduates from schools across the county to discuss what they would like to see in their community. Following the discussion, Neely prepared a report for SPEDA's board of directors and an essay for publication.

SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said the group's insight will help today's community leaders plan for tomorrow's residents.

"While we are definitely working for 'the now,' we are also planning for the future and preparing our community for its next generation of leaders and citizens," Girdler said. "It's difficult to affect change from a distance. This is how change happens."



From left, Southwestern graduate Chase Eastham, Pulaski County graduate Grant Oakes, Somerset graduates Aryan Patel, Olivia Stevens, Jonathan Ramsey and Devan Neely, and Southwestern graduate Bailey Patterson.

Overwhelmingly, the group’s members — four SHS graduates, two Southwestern graduates and one Pulaski County High School graduate — agree they would like to move back to their hometown after college for the close-knit community aspect but are unsure about what job opportunities await them. They suggested creating more research opportunities for high school students and finding more internships so students can network in the business community sooner.

“One thing I don’t see very much of in Somerset is businesses reaching out about internships and shadowing,” said SHS graduate Olivia Stevens, who plans to go into the U.S. Air Force and become a dentist. “For me, I’d have to go ask eight dentists to get 40 hours of shadowing. Those hours are a big deal to me. Maybe we should have a program that would help us get jobs during transition years.”

And while the arts community is thriving in Somerset and that is one aspect these students applauded, Southwestern graduate Bailey Patterson said she plans to pursue an acting career — and as an actress, she must join an equity union. No one in this area hires equity employees, “so I have no opportunities here,” she said.

Those students pursuing medical degrees said they feel there’s an opportunity for growth in this field. One challenge facing them, should they practice here, is how to get people to seek treatment in Somerset instead of larger cities.

“People seem to feel safer with doctors in larger cities, but we’re just as intelligent, just as capable here,” said Southwestern graduate Chase Eastham, who plans to study neurology.

All of the students agreed Somerset is a great place to raise a family, and they like the momentum the community has right now in economic development and tourism. They said the community could benefit from indoor sports and recreational facilities for soccer, tennis and shooting, as well as more public transportation options. They said they hope leaders recruit more projects like the Horse Soldier Bourbon distillery, that events, outdoor art projects and festivals continue and that an atmosphere of diversity and inclusivity is fostered.

“Another part of loving where you live is having something to look forward to,” Neely said. “We need to keep recruiting exciting projects.”

Girdler said the feedback gathered from these young people is invaluable and will serve SPEDA well as it continues to approach economic development from a quality of life perspective.

“I am grateful to all of these students for sharing their thoughts in such an open, honest way,” Girdler said. “We are doing everything in our power to build a community they will want to come home to. These students are our future — they’re why we need to look at economic development through a different lens. If we can attract their skillsets and talent after college, our community will undoubtedly thrive.”

Read Neely’s [full report](#) on the focus group.

# Local graduates share wish-list for making Pulaski County their home

---

 [somersetkyleads.com/local-graduates-share-wish-list-for-making-pulaski-county-their-home/](https://somersetkyleads.com/local-graduates-share-wish-list-for-making-pulaski-county-their-home/)

September 9, 2021

## ***Conservation, sustainability and diversity are all important factors***

---

In the race for superlatives, the graduates of the Class of 2021 could easily earn the distinction of “most adaptable.”

Many of these students experienced their senior year virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic, choosing to enter the workforce while finishing their high school classes online instead of going back into the classroom.

Having to adapt to challenging circumstances has given them a unique perspective on education, the local economy and what would encourage them to stay or move back to Pulaski County — points of view they shared during a recent focus group session with the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA).

Living in a community that is more environmentally conscious, sustainable, walkable and diverse is a top priority for these students, who participated in the focus group as part of the capstone project for SPEDA’s internship program. Every summer, SPEDA’s intern assembles a group of recent high school graduates to discuss what they’re looking for in choosing a community in which to live.

The goal: Using this feedback to create programs and initiatives that will encourage students to stay in or move back to Somerset-Pulaski County. Interns then submit a report about what they learned from the group.

“We want to do everything we can to make this community a better place,” SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said. “We truly value these students’ opinions. What is it these students like about this community? What is it they don’t like? What goals do they want to pursue? What they tell us will become part of our mission and vision going forward.”

This year’s intern, Pulaski County High School (PCHS) graduate Shelbie Black, led the conversation among her peers, which included Southwestern High School graduate Madison Trusty and PCHS graduates Addie Wilson and Macy Hudson. Caring for the community was a common thread among the issues the group discussed, which ranged from mental health resources to tourism, the environment and transportation.

Suggestions from these students to make Pulaski County a place they want to return include:



- Preserving and promoting the community’s beauty and outdoor charm while adding more green space. “We’re talking about Somerset growing as a community, raising our economy, attracting more people. I feel like we’re expanding and making changes, but we’re building on top of what we already have and taking away all of the green space,” Hudson said. “We should avoid becoming another concrete jungle.”
- Making the community more walkable with sidewalks and adding bike lanes, which would also help in improving homelessness and unemployment. “Living in Pulaski County, we all come into the center from outside communities. We have to drive. In Somerset, in the city, I think it’s important to cut back on emissions, encourage more walking and biking downtown,” Trusty said.
- Continuing progress in providing opportunities for people of all walks of life by promoting the arts and adding public transportation options that connect Somerset to outlying areas in Pulaski County. “As our community is growing ... we need to accommodate all types of people, whether poor or rich, whether they drive a Tesla or walk down the road,” Wilson said.



*SPEDA team members joined 2021 graduates in a focus group session to learn more about the change they would like to see in their community post-graduation. From left, SPEDA communications consultant Julie Nelson Harris, Southwestern graduate Madison Trusty, Pulaski graduates Addie Wilson and Macy Hudson, SPEDA intern and Pulaski graduate Shelbie Black, SPEDA Chief Accounting Officer Jessica Carlton, and SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler.*

One problem overshadowing all of these suggestions is the perception that staying in Somerset-Pulaski County after high school or returning here after college means you are failing to succeed.

“You’re either an accelerated student and going to college and going away to build a life, or you’re staying here and working a factory job,” Wilson said. “There’s no in-between.”

These students hope this perception will change if more young people take part in making positive changes in the community. Finding more ways for high school students to get involved in economic and community development efforts is important, Black said. While local leaders and organizations have improved their social media presence as a way of communicating with this audience, they need to put more emphasis on reaching out to young people.

“While obviously some young people and some adults don’t care about changes in the community, many (like the focus group participants) do,” Black wrote in her final report. “In fact, one could even say the kind of graduates that care about these things are also the kind who will be involved in the community as adults and the kind that the community should be prioritizing.”

Before her internship at SPEDA, Black said the chances she would return to Pulaski County after college were “slim.”

“I guess you could call me a skeptic,” Black said. “Pulaski has always been the kind of place I wanted to live, just never the kind I wanted to work in. But greater exposure to our community’s momentum makes it clear to me that Somerset is becoming more and more like a place I can call home.”

# SPEDA purchases warehouse to expand inmate re-entry program

[somersetkyleads.com/speda-purchases-warehouse-to-expand-inmate-re-entry-program/](https://somersekyleads.com/speda-purchases-warehouse-to-expand-inmate-re-entry-program/)

September 16, 2021



## ***Pulaski County Detention Center will lease-to-own the building, which will be used as a technical training facility for inmates***

In an effort to be a state leader in re-entry programs, change the lives of those who are incarcerated and improve workforce opportunities, the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA) has purchased a warehouse from Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital (LCRH) that will be used as a technical training facility for inmates.

The Pulaski County Detention Center (PCDC) will lease the 6,000-square-foot building on Thannoli Drive, which sits adjacent to the jail on hospital property, until the \$40,000 purchase price has been made whole. At that time, SPEDA will donate the building to the detention center, SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said. Though the building is structurally sound, significant remodeling is needed — work PCDC inmates will complete.

“While we all agree jail should be a deterrent, we should also agree that we should train these folks for a better life when they get out,” Girdler said. “The Pulaski County Detention Center is already providing excellent training opportunities for inmates and having this



building will only enhance this effort. There is not another economic development authority or community in the Commonwealth of Kentucky doing this kind of work so collaboratively nor at this high of a level. It is truly a groundbreaking program.”

Girdler said LCRH CEO Robert Parker has been an excellent advocate for SPEDA and the detention center in negotiating an affordable purchase price for the building with the hospital’s parent company, LifePoint Health.

“Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital is a wonderful asset and community partner,” Girdler said. “Their team does so much behind the scenes that the public rarely sees, and this is yet another example of their dedication. We are grateful for the work our hospital and LifePoint Health contribute to Somerset and Pulaski County on a daily basis.”

Parker said the hospital team is proud to be able to facilitate this purchase for SPEDA and appreciates the effort of all involved to undertake a project of this kind.

“Improving the health of our community, including the creation of new opportunities for all of its citizens, ensures a vibrant and qualified workforce for our future,” Parker said.

PCDC launched its [inmate re-entry program](#) in November 2019, a partnership with SPEDA and Somerset Community College to offer soft skills and technical training to inmates so they are better prepared to enter the workforce upon their release. Inmates can earn a welding certificate through the program and be placed in a job with one of several local businesses that participate.

Pulaski County Jailer Anthony McCollum said an additional facility is needed to grow the program.

“This building was perfect for us,” McCollum said to SPEDA board members at their Sept. 2 meeting. “We all felt it was good for the detention center, good for SPEDA and good for the community. It is a win-win for everyone.”

McCollum said because of SPEDA’s help to expand the program by purchasing this facility, PCDC can build a re-entry program that is a leading example throughout the state.

“As we all know, one entity can’t do that alone,” McCollum said. “It’s going to take us working together to get this done.”

Collaboration has been a renewed focus for SPEDA since its creation, Somerset Mayor Alan Keck said, and has been the key to so many significant achievements in such a short period of time.

“Our holistic approach to economic development is at its core about collaboration, working together to create opportunities for people of all walks of life,” Keck said. “We cannot forget to provide those opportunities for inmates who will be re-entering our community. One of the



keys to recovery is a focus on transition. Providing resources to assist in this transition is critical, and I applaud the detention center for leading this effort.”

Pulaski County Judge-Executive Steve Kelley said the purchase of this property is a win for workforce development efforts in Pulaski County, one of SPEDA’s pillars of economic development.

“This partnership will allow us to lead the state forward again in rehabilitating our inmate population to prepare them for re-entry into the workforce,” Kelley said. “Jailer McCullom is blazing new ground with this innovative approach to inmate training. My special thanks to LCRH for embracing this vision, and helping us continue to make Pulaski County a better place for all of us.”

## **CRITICAL Skills**

8 PCDC inmates become first graduating class of community reentry program

**BY CARLA SLAVEY**

COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL

“Sometimes an individual’s success is a group effort,” said Jailer Anthony McCollum.

He was speaking in front of a crowd of several during a graduation ceremony being held Thursday at Somerset Community College, but he was directing most of his comments toward the eight special graduates – the first graduates of a community-wide effort to give job skills to inmates of the Pulaski County Detention Center.

Known as the CRITICAL program – Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Inmates Transforming Individuals, Community and Livelihoods – the effort to offer training and a possible career to a group who may have difficulty finding jobs after serving their sentences is an effort that started with a meeting of various community leaders in 2019.

This week, the community got to

**SEE GRADUATES, A5**



**Eight inmates from the Pulaski County Detention Center became the first graduating class under a community-built program to give inmates work skills and career assistance. The students earned welder helper certificates.**

CARLA SLAVEY | CJ



**Students of the first graduating CRITICAL class present Jailer Anthony McCollum, right, with a fire pit they made. The class's instructor, Karl Watson, is seen at left.**

CARLA SLAVEY I CJ

---

## **GRADUATES:** Program teaches trade skills to inmates

From Page A1

see the first of hopefully many who will benefit from that partnership.

The graduates were Ryan Anderson, J.T. Coffey, Frank Hall, Mark Madden, Larry Ramsey, Brady Shultheiss, Andrew Scott and Corey Upchurch.

After completing an eight-week course, those eight can now consider themselves college graduates with a welder helper certificate.

The graduates themselves look at the certification as a great opportunity.

"I like welding. I'm glad I learned how to do it. I'm going to try to get out and do a good job doing it, and see where it takes me," said graduate Corey Upchurch. "It opened a lot of doors."

Larry Ramsey said earning the certification was something he wouldn't have been able to do on his own. "It's good what Anthony McCollum has done," he said. "It will be a great help for us when we get out."

Ramsey said he wanted to give a special thanks to everyone involved, while Upchurch specifically mentioned that he wanted to thank the course's teachers, instructor Karl Watson and adjunct instructor Mark Calhoun.

Watson said he was happy to be a part of the program and that he enjoyed being its instructor. "It was a very good class. Far exceeded my expectations. But I don't know what my expectations were."

Calhoun, who also works at Gatormade, also seemed happy to help out the men.

“I’ve been in the exact same place,” Calhoun said, meaning he understood what those men were going through. “That’s how I started out, coming from that to this.”

As part of the classwork, the students made a fire pit that Watson said had required them to use every piece of fabrication equipment in the shop to make.

After the graduation ceremony, that fire pit was presented to Jailor McCollum, who admired the craftsmanship and seemed pleased to have a reminder of what the students had learned.

McCollum said the students were eager to be a part of such a program, and they put in a lot of hard work to get where they are now.

So did the jail’s deputy jailers, who not only worked their shifts at the jail, but put in overtime to make sure the students could get to class and be successful at it, he said.

During the graduation ceremony, Somerset Community College’s President Dr. Carey Castle said it was a unique and significant ceremony for both the students and the college.

Dr. Castle told the audience that the program was a collaboration of many community partners and organizations, and not only gave the students a certificate, but helped them to build a resume, take part in mock interviews, and even have a real interview with local employers which gives them the potential to find a job when they get out of jail.

“Prior to being released, the third step [is] having additional workforce partners and agencies that provide support services for you, and include transportation services, clothing, housing – some of the very important things that are necessary to go back into society,” Castle said.

The program began as a meeting in 2019 between Castle, McCollum, SCC’s Vice President of Workforce Solutions Alesa Johnson and Chris Girdler, president and CEO of the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority.

Other partners like the Workforce Development Board and Goodwill Industries helped the program succeed, Castle said.

Girdler, who was in attendance at the graduation, called the first graduation “a long time coming, but well worth the wait. It’s such an exciting time for these men and their families. This is a win-win for Somerset, Pulaski County and the Lake Cumberland Region.”



# Kentucky Chamber CEO discusses the state's workforce crisis

> [somersetkyleads.com/kentucky-chamber-ceo-discusses-the-state-workforce-crisis/](https://somersetkyleads.com/kentucky-chamber-ceo-discusses-the-state-workforce-crisis/)

March 9, 2022

*Industrial Leaders Breakfast presentation includes important data about Kentucky's workforce participation, initiatives to improve*

More than 50 people representing 27 businesses turned out for our quarterly Industrial Leaders Breakfast on March 3 to hear from Ashli Watts, president and CEO of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. Ashli delivered a presentation jam-packed with great information about Kentucky's workforce crisis and the solutions that are imperative to ensuring workforce participation increases.

Many thanks to Ashli for traveling to Somerset to share this valuable data with us, to Somerset Community College for hosting, and to everyone who participated. SPEDA's Industrial Leaders Breakfast Series is another way we support our existing businesses and industries by bringing them together to discuss their needs and learning how we can work together to improve the local economy.

If you missed this breakfast and would like to review the information Ashli shared, or if you attended and would like to read the presentation again, download her slide deck [here](#).







# Free hospitality training available to Somerset-Pulaski County employees

[somersetkyleads.com/free-hospitality-training-available-to-somerset-pulaski-county-employees/](https://somersetkyleads.com/free-hospitality-training-available-to-somerset-pulaski-county-employees/)

April 19, 2022



## ***SPEDA initiative promotes the need for excellent customer service and supports the local tourism industry***

The Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA) will host its annual free [hospitality training](#) on May 10 — an effort to help the community’s front-line service workers feel confident in providing the best possible customer service to visitors.

Tourism is Somerset-Pulaski County’s No. 1 industry. More than 4 million recreational visitors visit Lake Cumberland every year, underscoring the need to ensure businesses in the community understand the basics of good hospitality. In 2020, the latest tourism data available, visitors spent more than \$115 million in Pulaski County, generating significant tax revenue and supporting more than 1,000 tourism-related jobs.

“When you put that 4 million figure in perspective, that is more than Yellowstone National Park or even the Grand Canyon,” said Michelle Allen, [Lake Cumberland Tourism](#) executive director and leader of SPEDA’s hospitality training series. “Lake Cumberland is one of the

nation's outdoor tourism destinations and it's imperative that we do all we can to help our front-line employees feel prepared to serve those visitors as we approach the summer months."

SPEDA's hospitality training focuses on the basics of excellent customer service while teaching front-line employees how to direct visitors to community events and attractions. Allen said the course will cover telephone etiquette, how to deal with difficult customers, the importance of going the extra mile and appropriate dress.

Front-line employees are those who work in hotel lobbies, retail, dining establishments, convenience stores or other positions that interact directly with visitors. While the training is available to anyone locally who would like to attend, it is tailored specifically to those workers, Allen said.

In addition to leading tourism efforts in Pulaski County and serving as the chair of the Southern Kentucky Vacations region, Allen has delivered similar training courses across the area on behalf of Tour Southern and Eastern Kentucky, and most recently, for employees at Louisville's Kentucky Derby Museum.

"If businesses in metropolitan areas like Louisville take advantage of this training, ours should as well," said Allen, who is also the vice-chair of the SPEDA board of directors. "My message is simple: A visitor's first impression could always be their last, so it's crucial for us to shine the first time. We want visitors to keep returning to Somerset and Pulaski County not only because they love it here, but because their experience is second-to-none. I am grateful SPEDA sees the value in this and provides this training free to the community."


Girdler said Allen brings a wealth of experience to the table for participants and hopes many will take advantage of this free training opportunity.

"Putting our best foot forward as a community is incredibly important in ensuring we remain competitive as a top outdoor recreation destination," Girdler said. "This training not only fosters business growth, but it also supports our No. 1 industry and encourages and empowers the employees working within it. That is at the heart of SPEDA's mission and our core value of innovation. We will always work to make opportunities available that are equally beneficial to the growth of our economy and our people."

SPEDA's free hospitality training will be 9-11 a.m. Tuesday, May 10 in the council chambers of the City of Somerset Energy Center, 306 E. Mt. Vernon St. For more information or to RSVP, call (606) 425-5409 or e-mail SPEDA Chief Accounting Officer Jessica Carlton at [jessica@speda.org](mailto:jessica@speda.org).



# Nearly 200 local students achieve Work Ethic Seal designation at annual luncheon

 [somesetkyleads.com/nearly-200-local-students-achieve-work-ethic-seal-designation-at-annual-luncheon/](https://somesetkyleads.com/nearly-200-local-students-achieve-work-ethic-seal-designation-at-annual-luncheon/)

April 25, 2022

---

## ***University of Kentucky and NBA standout Derek Anderson delivers inspirational message to students about creating positive habits and building character***

---

Nearly 200 local high school students listened Wednesday at The Center for Rural Development as former basketball star Derek Anderson gave them the directions to success: Listen to learn and create positive habits that build character.

The Louisville native retired from the National Basketball Association (NBA) in 2008 following a standout career at the University of Kentucky and moved home to build the [Stamina Foundation](#), an organization that empowers youth and young adults with the resources and life skills they need to follow their dreams.

The name of the foundation stems from Anderson's 2013 book, *Stamina*, in which he tells his inspiring life story of finding enough strength and courage to go from sleeping in an abandoned apartment at the age of 11 to becoming an NCAA, Olympic, and NBA champion.

The message was especially appropriate for this group of juniors and seniors, who received the [Work Ethic Seal designation](#) — a program in which students who meet specific criteria related to work ethic and soft skills receive a special seal on their high school diploma and transcript. The program is a partnership of the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA), Pulaski County Schools, Somerset Independent Schools and the Pulaski County Educational Consortium.

SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said he chose to bring Anderson to speak at this year's luncheon because his story is an excellent reminder that hard work and determination can bring success in the most challenging situations.

"Derek Anderson is an incredibly compelling and inspirational speaker, and I am thrilled our Work Ethic Seal recipients could hear his story of perseverance," Girdler said. "Derek impresses me, and so many others, with his constant ability to move forward in the face of adversity, always with a smile on his face. I am grateful he spent his afternoon helping motivate this outstanding group of young people in our community."

To qualify for the Work Ethic Seal, juniors and seniors must:

- Miss no more than three days of school during the school year;
- Have no more than four tardies or early dismissals;
- Maintain a minimum of a 2.5-grade point average with no failures;
- Be involved in at least two different community service, employment or extracurricular

activities;

- And submit a resume and completed application and any necessary documentation by the advertised due date.

The Work Ethic Seal program is an important component of Pulaski County being a certified Work Ready Community, said Roxanna Bishop, Pulaski County Schools public relations director and Work Ethic Seal coordinator. The Work Ready Communities certification — an initiative of the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet — serves as an assurance to business and industry that the community is committed to providing the highly-skilled workforce required in today's competitive global economy.

Anderson congratulated the Work Ethic Seal recipients and encouraged them to create positive habits, maintain a positive attitude and remain determined to succeed — no excuses.

“The greatest rewards go to the toughest warriors,” Anderson said. “Be the toughest warrior.”









Somerset Community College

May 9 · 🌐



Congrats to SCC's third cohort of re-entry graduates from the Pulaski County Detention Center who just received their welder helper certificates from SCC. 🙌 Thank you to all of our partners, faculty, staff and administration that made this program possible. #SCCProud #KCTCS #adulthoodeducation

From left to right: Dustin Daulton, Brandon Roy, Codie Marcum, Brian Cook, Kyle Maddox, Kevin Knuckles, and Dakotah Boehm.







Congratulations to the 2021-2022 GED graduates! We're so proud of you and all of your accomplishments and so happy we got to celebrate you today! @PulaskiSkillsU This group is just part of the 60 GED's that Pulaski Adult Education has earned in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. SCC Adult Ed which covers Casey, McCreary, Pulaski, Russell and Wayne counties has 123 GED's all together for this fiscal year. We celebrate with all of you! #SCCProud



# Free luncheon will highlight incentives available for small and start-up businesses

[somersetkyleads.com/free-luncheon-will-highlight-incentives-available-for-small-and-start-up-businesses/](https://somersekyleads.com/free-luncheon-will-highlight-incentives-available-for-small-and-start-up-businesses/)

June 7, 2022

## ***June 21 workshop delivered by Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development Innovation Office and sponsored by SPEDA, Chamber***

Innovation is crucial in finding new strategies that will strengthen the community's economy, and collaboration can bring those strategies to life.

In that spirit, the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA) and the Somerset-Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce are partnering to bring a free workshop to small businesses and start-ups in the community with fewer than 50 employees to learn about incentive programs that foster growth.

The workshop — a luncheon scheduled at noon Tuesday, June 21 at Somerset Community College's Hal Rogers Student Commons Building — will be presented by Kristine McNeil, a project manager for the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development's Innovation Office. McNeil will share information about the Kentucky Small Business Tax Credit, loan support options, and how small tech companies can leverage an Angel Tax Credit program to attract investors.

SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said providing learning opportunities for small businesses is key to having a comprehensive economic development strategy that elevates the entire community.



*Kristine McNeil, project manager with the Kentucky Innovation Office*

“We often talk about the incentives available to our largest employers, but these programs exist for Main Street businesses as well and we want to ensure everyone understands the opportunities available to them so they can be successful in their endeavors,” Girdler said. “SPEDA and the Chamber work together to be the conduit for delivering this information, and we’re grateful for the partnership.”

Working together to bring resources to businesses also helps demonstrate the power of collaboration, Chamber Director Bobby Clue said.

“We want our small businesses to grow and thrive, and we can help them do that not only by providing valuable resources that support their development but also by leading by example,” Clue said. “The Chamber’s partnership with SPEDA is proof of what can be accomplished when we work together. Our economy is thriving, and it is in large part because we see no boundaries to collaboration.”

Seating for the June 21 luncheon hosted by SPEDA and the Chamber is limited and available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Reserve your spot by emailing SPEDA Chief Accounting Officer Jessica Carlton at [jessica@speda.org](mailto:jessica@speda.org).

# Deputy commissioner of state ED cabinet shares resources, data with local industry leaders

[somesetkyleads.com/deputy-commissioner-of-state-ed-cabinet-shares-resources-data-with-local-industry-leaders/](https://somesetkyleads.com/deputy-commissioner-of-state-ed-cabinet-shares-resources-data-with-local-industry-leaders/)

June 14, 2022



## ***SPEDA breakfast series brings leaders together to network and share ideas***

Industry leaders had the opportunity to learn what resources are available to them through the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development last week at SPEDA’s Industrial Leaders Breakfast, a quarterly initiative that brings business leaders together to discuss needs and share ideas.

“Just as SPEDA plays a role locally in supporting companies in the community, the cabinet plays that role across the state — and communicating how both of our organizations can help businesses grow and thrive is critical to that mission,” SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler said. “We believe in seeking valuable feedback, listening to constructive criticism and helping businesses where we can at every turn. Our industrial leaders breakfast is a platform for making this happen.”

Kristina Slattery, deputy commissioner for the Department for Business Development, was the event’s guest speaker, sharing more about the cabinet’s role, what programs are available to help Kentucky businesses, and trends that are developing within the economy.



“It’s imperative as a community of our size and with things that we’re undertaking that we have a good working relationship with the folks at the cabinet,” SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler told the group gathered Wednesday at the Lake Cumberland Farmers Market. “Kristina has a lot of experience in the cabinet and working in many various levels there, and she also has a lot of experience in the private sector before joining the cabinet. As you all know, I think the private sector experience means more than anything because you know those trials and tribulations that the business world goes through, then you can take those experiences on to the cabinet to help others.”



From left, SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler, State Rep. Shane Baker, Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development Deputy Commissioner Kristina Slattery, Cabinet Project Manager Jerod Metz, and Somerset Mayor Alan Keck at June’s Industrial Leaders Breakfast.

In addition to recruiting new jobs and investment, Slattery said the cabinet focuses on retention and expansion, providing programs and incentives for existing businesses, and advocating for businesses to education partners at the state level to help find workforce development solutions.

She shared that Kentucky had a record year in 2021 in recruitment, with the announcement of a major electric vehicle battery manufacturing project in Hardin County and growth in the food and beverage industry. Four of Somerset-Pulaski County’s major announcements last year — Horse Soldier Bourbon’s \$250 million distillery experience, AppHarvest’s 30-acre

indoor farm, Conner Logistics Inc's headquarter relocation and Continental Refining Company's \$26.8 million soybean crushing facility — contributed to that growth, Slattery said.

Slattery commended the leadership in Somerset-Pulaski County for helping make these investments a reality and recognized SPEDA for becoming a statewide leader in economic development.

“To see that in the community ... those are new jobs, those are new people adding revenue to the system, that's new property tax being generated, new sales tax being generated, more taxes for our school districts, so we're excited to see those new investments continue to come,” she said.

Slattery shared several incentive programs available to businesses, such as the [Kentucky Business Investment Program](#), which provides income tax credits and wage assessments to specific categories of businesses. She also shared the [Product Development Initiative grant program](#), a partnership between the cabinet and the Kentucky Association for Economic Development that provides competitive grants to Kentucky economic development organizations and local governments to supplement site and building improvement projects.

She also shared information about public services available through the cabinet, like site evaluation services, detailed community data, financial package preparation and public announcement coordination.

“We are a public service agency and we want to be here to serve our community,” Slattery said.

The next SPEDA Industrial Leaders Breakfast is being planned for the third quarter of the year. Details will be announced in the coming weeks.



# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## Is Somerset Community College offering bachelor's degrees?

No, Somerset Community College is one of the 16 colleges in the Kentucky Community & Technical College System. The bachelor's degrees will be offered by four-year universities and they will be using space on the SCC Somerset Campus.

## Will all bachelor's degrees be offered at the University Center?

No, specific degrees will be based on student, community and workforce needs.

## Will my degree come from the University Center of Southern Kentucky?

No. It will come from the university that you choose to attend.

## How will the classes be taught from the partnering universities?

There will be variety of delivery methods including face to face, hybrid and online.

## What will be the tuition rate?

Tuition rates will be determined by each participating university.

## Can Somerset Community College scholarships be used for the bachelor's degree programs?

No, SCC scholarships are for students attending Somerset Community College.

## Can the University Center potentially save me money?

Yes, students will not have to pay for room and board nor parking passes which is a substantial savings for students.

## Will I be able to complete my application and financial aid at the University Center?

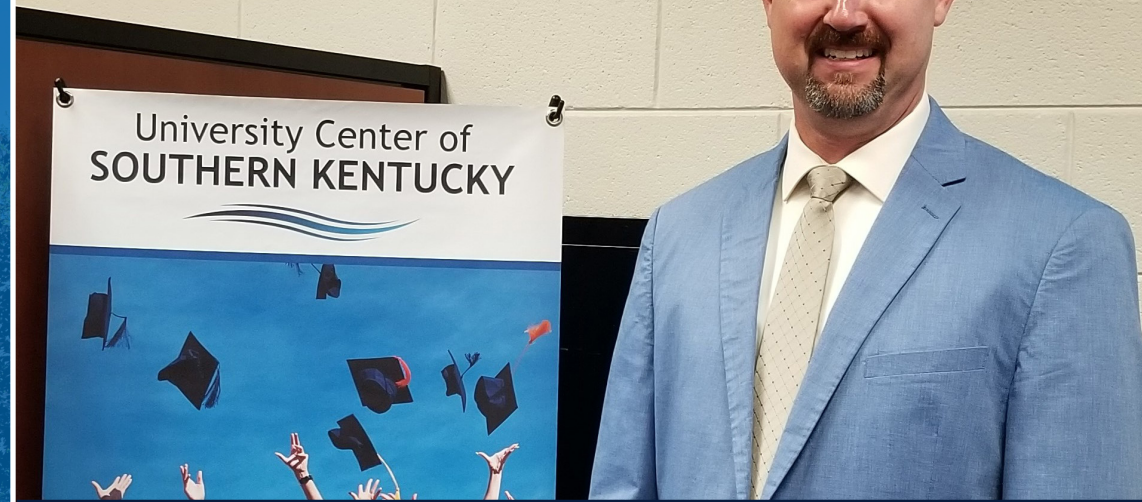
Yes, each partnering university will have staff available to assist with admission, financial aid, advising and registration.

## What if I have completed my associates degree, can I apply to a partnering university?

Yes, you will be able to apply for admission and will need to meet with a university advisor once those have been determined.

## Where is the University Center of Southern Kentucky located?

The University Center of Southern Kentucky is located in the Harold Rogers Student Commons on the SCC Somerset Campus – 2nd floor Room 210.



### For more information contact:

**Trent M. Pool**

Director, University Center of Southern Kentucky

Somerset Community College

Harold Rogers Student Commons, Room 210

808 Monticello Street

Somerset, KY 42501

606-451-6667

sccuniversitycenter@kctcs.edu

## Earn a bachelor's degree while continuing to live and work in the community that you LOVE!



University Center of  
SOUTHERN KENTUCKY

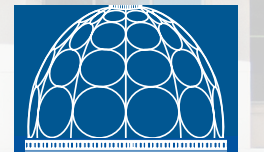


# University Center of Southern Kentucky



In partnership with:

**EKU**



LINDSEY  
WILSON  
COLLEGE



MOREHEAD STATE  
UNIVERSITY

University of  
Kentucky

**WKU**



University Center of  
SOUTHERN KENTUCKY





## About Us

The University Center of Southern Kentucky is a consortium of postsecondary educational institutions bringing bachelor's degrees and educational opportunities close to home in Southern Kentucky. The University Center of Southern Kentucky, described by Congressman Harold "Hal" Rogers as a "multi-versity" for student success, will provide several pathways and delivery methods for students to earn a four-year degree from partnering universities in Kentucky on the campus of Somerset Community College. After completing a two-year degree at SCC, students will be able to choose from the partnering university of their choice and have access to student support services to complete a four-year bachelor's degree at the Somerset Campus.

The partnership between the University Center of Southern Kentucky and the participating universities was created based on community demands, workforce needs and student access. The one thing missing from Southern Kentucky is the option for students to get an affordable bachelor's degree. Now high school graduates will have the option to stay close to home to get a four-year degree at an affordable rate and non-traditional students will have an option to further their educational goals.

## Our Mission

The mission of the University Center of Southern Kentucky is to provide local and accessible transfer education pathways through collaboration with post secondary institutions to increase educational attainment, foster economic growth, and improve employability and quality of life in the southern Kentucky region.

## Our Vision

The University Center of Southern Kentucky aspires to be recognized as a premier model of higher education collaboration providing access to continuing post secondary degrees that improve the economic growth and vitality of our region.

## Diversity

SCC/UCSK is committed to empowering its campus by embracing diversity and making a positive impact in our community through equitable and inclusive learning. We strive to impart on our students, faculty, and staff both educational and employment experiences that result in the success and unity of our evolving community, region, state, nation, and world.

## Visit us on the web!

[somerset.kctcs.edu/about/campuses/university-center-of-southern-kentucky](http://somerset.kctcs.edu/about/campuses/university-center-of-southern-kentucky)



# University Center of Southern Kentucky

### **EKU:** Bachelor of Science (BS): Criminal Justice (on campus)

Online Bachelor's degree options  
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): Accounting  
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): General Business  
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): Risk Management & Insurance  
Communication Studies  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Corrections & Juvenile Justice Studies  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Criminal Justice  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Police Studies  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Emergency Medical Care, Emergency Services Administration Option  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Child & Family Studies, Child Development Concentration  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Fire Protection & Safety Engineering Technology  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Fire Protection Administration  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Homeland Security  
Bachelor of Arts (BA): General Studies  
Bachelor of Arts (BA): Political Science  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Psychology  
R.N. to B.S.N.  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Occupational Safety  
Bachelor of Social Work (BSW): Social Work  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Sport Management

### **Lindsey Wilson College:** (on campus & online)

Bachelor of Arts (BA): Human Services & Counseling  
Master of Education (M.Ed.): Counseling & Human Development  
Online programs  
Bachelor of Arts (BA): Business Administration  
Bachelor of Arts (BA): Criminal Justice  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Nursing (R.N. to B.S.N.)  
Master of Business Administration (MBA)

### **MSU:** will offer the following online degree programs

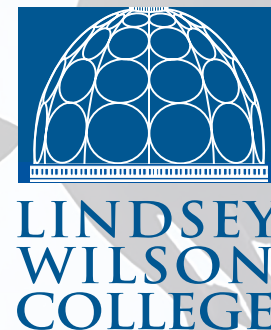
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): Accounting  
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): General Business  
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): Small Business Management & Entrepreneurship  
Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): Computer Information Systems  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Technology Management  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Leadership in Medical Imaging  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN): Post-Licensure  
Bachelor of University Studies (BUS): Professional Studies

### **UK:** R.N. to B.S.N. (Hybrid)

### **WKU:**

Bachelor of Arts (BA): Criminology (Hybrid)  
Bachelor of Arts (BA): Sociology (Hybrid)  
Bachelor of Arts (BA): Management (Business Administration Concentration) (Hybrid)  
Bachelor of Arts (BA): Elementary Education (Hybrid)  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Science and Mathematics Education with double major in either:  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Middle Grades Mathematics or  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Middle School Science  
WKU Online Degree Options:  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Computer Information Technology  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Engineering Technology Management  
Bachelor of Science (BS): Organizational Leadership  
Master of Science (MS): Biology

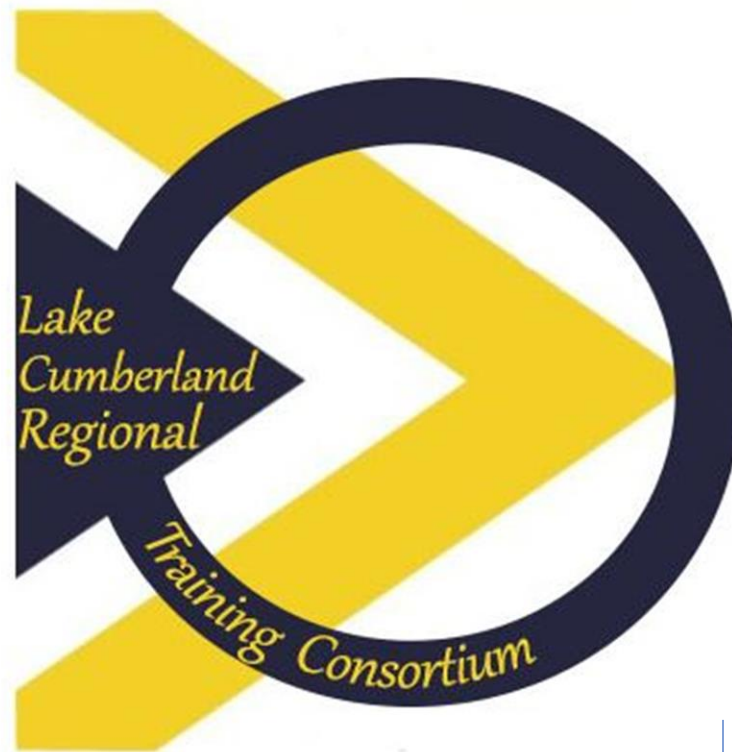
## Program Listing By University





# empowering *PEOPLE* through training

A new partnership with Somerset Community College (SCC), the Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA) is reviving an employer-led association that provides high-quality, inexpensive training to its members.



The Lake Cumberland Regional Training Consortium (LCRTC) offers a variety of courses in leadership, team building, customer service, information technology and safety, helping employees of member businesses improve their skills and offering networking opportunities for those companies that choose to join.



---

Membership to the consortium is \$100 per year for an organization, and any employee of that organization is eligible to participate in training sessions.



Becoming a member also provides employers with 50 points toward their Bluegrass State Skills Grant application, which offers reimbursements for worker training at Kentucky's new and expanding companies and for skills and occupational upgrade training for workers of Kentucky's existing companies.



“The Lake Cumberland Regional Training Consortium has proven to be invaluable to Cobb-Vantress over the past years in assisting our company with a variety of training needs for our front-line supervisors, hourly team members and managers. The classes offered are professional and economical.”

Lorrie West | *hr complex manager, cobb-vantress, inc.*

## COURSES OFFERED

### Leadership/Team Building

- Team Leadership
- Helping Your Team Work
- Conflict Management
- Identifying and Managing Priorities
- And Many More

### Information Technology

- Introduction to Computers
- Basic Excel
- Intermediate Excel
- Social Media
- And Many More

### Customer Service

- Caring for Customers
- Healing Customer Relationships
- And Many More

training to  
empower  
**PEOPLE**

LAKE CUMBERLAND REGIONAL  
TRAINING CONSORTIUM

306 East Mt. Vernon Street, Suite 316  
Somerset, KY 42501  
(606) 425-5409

[somersetkyleads.com/lake-cumberland-regional-training-consortium](http://somersetkyleads.com/lake-cumberland-regional-training-consortium)

## MEMBERS



SOMERSET  
PULASKI COUNTY  
Chamber of Commerce





## Extension Request Information and Instructions

Each certified Kentucky Work Ready Community status will last for three years, at which time each county must be recertified. In addition, approved communities can be granted a three-year extension of their current status. By the three-year anniversary of certification or at the end of the extension, the county shall submit a recertification update application. Certified Kentucky Work Ready Communities may continue to use their current certification status in marketing materials and communications until notified by acceptance or denial of recertification by the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board. Extensions are valid for three years from the date they are approved by the board.

### Purpose of the Extension

Your county should submit an extension rather than an application for recertification if either:

- a) You need more time to prepare your application materials.
- b) You are currently certified as Work Ready, but do not presently meet the qualifications for recertification.

### Extension Submittal Contents

Requests for extensions must be submitted in accordance with the application review timeline as posted on the Kentucky Work Ready Communities website to ensure ample time for review.

Completed applications must include:

1. **Extension Request Letter:** Use attached letter to request an extension.
2. **Updated Data/Statistics Form:** Staff will verify that all the data included on the sheet is correct.
3. **Narrative Explanation:** Please include a brief description of the circumstances that are requiring you to request this extension.
4. **Committee Roster:** Please include an updated roster of Work Ready committee members and their contact information.

### Extension Process:

The Kentucky Work Ready Community Review panel will review each extension requests. All questions from the review panel will be submitted to the applicant to provide additional information. Written responses must be received not less than one week prior to the scheduled meeting of the review panel.

The review panel may discuss and vote to recommend extensions to the Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board. The board will receive these recommendations at their next scheduled meeting. Applicants for extensions will be notified of the recommendation of the panel as well as the date, time and location of the meeting where action may be taken by the board.

**Brief Explanation**

Please include a brief explanation for why you are requesting this extension. What plans do you have in place for meeting the Work Ready criteria and why would this extension be helpful in pursuing those goals? Are there any specific criteria that you are having trouble meeting? What steps might be useful in meeting that criteria?

**Submittal Format**

All applications for extension must be submitted in PDF format and submitted by email, with receipt verification, or a flash drive via verifiable delivery. It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify delivery/receipt of the application.

**Mailing Address:**

300 Mero Road - 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Email: [workready@ky.gov](mailto:workready@ky.gov)

**Contact Information**

For more information or clarification, please contact either:

Sara Jagers, KWIB Administrative Coordinator

*Bluegrass, Cumberlands, EKCEP, Northern Kentucky and TENCO*

*Green River, Kentuckiana Works, Lincoln Trail, South Central, and Western Kentucky*

**Phone Number:** 502-234-8466

**Email:** [sara.jagers@ky.gov](mailto:sara.jagers@ky.gov)



# Community Criteria Status

▼ Select a County ▼

Christian

If a county meets all criteria, it will appear blue instead of red. Though these five criteria are the only currently defined metrics, they are not the only criteria that are under consideration for the program. Some criteria include an exception rule, which you can learn more about on the Work Ready Community's website. Visit <https://ced.ky.gov/WorkReady/> for more information.

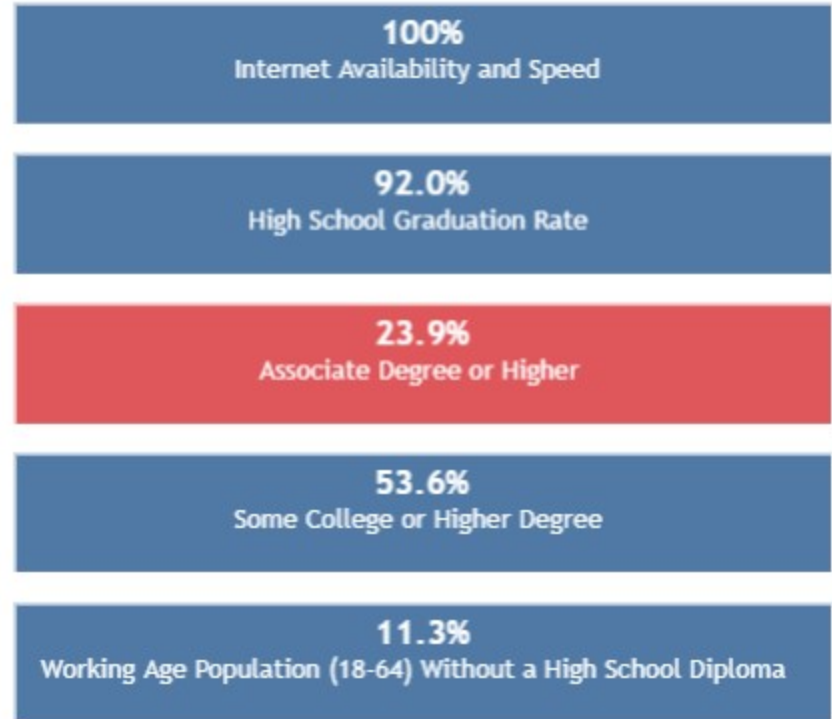
## Required Criteria

● Meets Criteria      ● Does Not Meet Criteria



Does Not Meet All Criteria

\*Criteria are set to round to the nearest tenth of a percent on the dashboard but may have missed the cutoffs found at the top of the dashboard, resulting in a 'Does Not Meet Criteria.'



## Support Information

5-Year Projected Demand



Click Icon to View

Workforce Overview of Kentucky Regions



Click Icon to View

Certification Status



Work Ready

Workforce Participation Rate



55%

NCRC and KESC Certificates (2020)



1,296



Date May 31, 2022

Dear Work Ready Communities Review Committee,

Christian County is requesting an extension for our **(circle one)** WorkReady / WorkReady In Progress status. We were initially approved on May 2018. Currently, we have evaluated where we are as related to the new criteria. Please see attached.

We understand that we will have up to <sup>3</sup> one year <sup>extension</sup> from the extension date to file for recertification. We **(circle one)** would like to request / do not need assistance at this time from the Work Ready Communities team.

Our Work Ready Communities lead person **(circle one)** has not changed / has also changed and is **(name)** Angie Major who is with **(organization)** Christian County Chamber of Commerce. His / Her contact info is:

- Email: amajor@christiancountychamber.com
- Phone: 270-885-9096

Please feel free to contact me for any additional information you need.

Sincerely,



## Extension Request Form

Name of County **Christian** Date: **5/31/2022**

County Contact Name **Angie Major**

Email Address/ Phone # **amajor@christiancountychamber.com 270-885-9096**

Criteria	At time of most recent Application.		Most Recent Data	
High School Graduation Rate	90.6	%	92	%
Percent of working age adults without a High School Diploma or Equivalent (HSE)	11.7	%	11.3	%
Percent of working age adults with some college or higher degree	55.7	%	53.6	%
Percent of working age adults with an Associate's degree or higher	27.7	%	23.9	%
Percentage of Households with Broadband access of 25Mbps or higher	80.8	%	100%	%
Number of career readiness credentials Awarded (NCRC, KY Essential Skills, other)	NCRC - 860 Ky Essential Skills - 12 Enrolled		1296	
Number of Work-Based Learning Opportunities in County	4 registered apprenticeships; 40+ companies with Work Based Learning programs such as co-ops, Internships, and earn and learn.		11 registered apprenticeships; 55+ companies with Work Based Learning programs such as co-ops, Internships, and Earn and Learn.	
Plan to promote the Engagement of Special Populations	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	In Development
Implementation of the High School Work Ethic Seal	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	In Development
Supply / Demand Evaluation	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	In Development

5-year job demand majority do not require associates degree or higher.







**Narrative Explanation of the circumstances that are requiring Christian County to request this extension.**

Christian County was designated a Work Ready Community in May 2018. Christian County has followed the Work Ready Community initiatives that we have in place to meet the requirements for the recertification benchmarks. Christian County is currently a few points under the benchmark for *Percent of working age adults with an Associate degree or higher*.

For Christian County, Based on BLS ( Bureau of Labor and Statistics) (2020); there are approximately 1,952 jobs that don't require a college degree. We believe our attainment rate can be modified to a goal of 22% since the majority of the county's 5-year job demand in an approved KWIB sectors do not require an associates degree or higher.

The Christian County Work Ready Community Committee is requesting a three year extension that would allow Christian County the opportunity to reach the target benchmarks determined by the Work Ready Community Review Panel.

Additionally, Christian County will continue to monitor the metrics quarterly during scheduled Work Ready Community meetings each January, April, June, September, and December.

Thank you for your consideration in granting an extension to Christian County to maintain its Work Ready status prior to recertification.

Christian County Public Schools, Hopkinsville Community College, and Murray State University are now able to have both in person and virtual learning environments to accommodate all students. We believe Christian County will be able to begin the process to increase our *Percent of working age adults with an Associate degree or higher* to reach the criteria set for Work Ready Communities.

The following initiatives are available in Christian County residents to enhance the Educational Attainment rate for Christian County. All initiatives have virtual options available in order to keep community engagement active.

Mental Mapping

Mental Mapping is a voluntary program for high school students. Mental Mapping is led by the Director of Workforce and Education Development from the Chamber of Commerce and community volunteers. The school administration, guidance counselors and teachers can recommend a student for Mental Mapping. Each week the Director of Workforce and a community volunteer meet with the students individually and as a group, dependent upon the discussion topic that week. Each student is interviewed to find their likes, dislikes, career/college aspirations, and current transcripts and GPA's. Based on each student's individual information, students are guided to pursue dual credit courses, AP courses, Career and Technical Pathways. We also share with students the many programs available to them such as Hopkinsville's Mayor's Youth

a high school in Christian County to attend HCC tuition free for 2 years. This program has been in existence since 2012.

Regardless of a student's county of residence, any student who graduates from Christian County High School, Hopkinsville High School, Heritage Christian Academy or University Heights Academy, and meets the requirements will be eligible.

### Articulation Agreements/Dual Credit

The Dual Credit Program at Hopkinsville Community College allows high school students to take college courses for which the student can concurrently earn both college and high school credit.

With the permission of their high schools or homeschool associations, qualified students may enroll in college courses at Hopkinsville Community College. Successful completion of these courses also allows high school students the opportunity to make substantial progress toward their college education before finishing high school.

Academic Support at Hopkinsville Community College · Academic Counseling provides support, helps establish educational plans, and assists in developing a plan to help achieve your academic goals.

Early Alert System identifies students determined to be "at risk" due to academic or personal factors--you will receive a letter from the college providing you with support information when you are not attending classes or have other risk factors. Pay attention to these strategies! · Academic Support provides tutoring and teaches study/life skills necessary to be successful in higher education. You can also take the class, GEN 102 - Strategies for Academic Success, to help you be more successful in college. · Academic Foundations teaches and enhances basic academic skills to start or continue your education. · Career and Transfer Assistance is available to assist students with career assessment and exploration, resume writing and job interview coaching. · Adult Education Services will help adult students who did not complete high school study for the GED to earn the High School Equivalency Diploma. Adult Education also provides guidance for adults who want to refresh their basic academic skills before enrolling at HCC. · Testing provides KYOTE, TABE required entrance exams, GED, computer literacy, business, and industry testing. · Library Services include help with research skills, distance learning services and a computer lab. · Disability Services ensures that individuals with documented disabilities have equal access to all educational opportunities.

Developing a My Academic Plan (MAP) is an opportunity to meet with your advisor and develop a structured class list to help you achieve your educational goals--some of the plan guidelines are also available on the Programs of Study pages. You must have a signed plan developed with your advisor on file to self-register for classes. You can find your advisor's name in your Student Self Service Student Center.

### Advanced Placement Courses

Christian County Public Schools offer Advance Placement courses for high school students. Advanced Placement (AP) courses have been devised to allow exceptionally strong academic students to gain college credit in some subject areas while still in high school. A student must take the AP exam and may obtain college credit if a score of 3 or greater is obtained.

### HOPFAME

HOPFAME is a partnership of regional manufacturers whose purpose is to implement apprentice-style training to create a pipeline of highly-skilled workers. To date Christian County has 12 (twelve) industries participating in this program. The concept offers a five-semester college degree program that matches

## Work Ready Scholarship

To be eligible for the Work Ready Scholarship, you need to be a U.S. citizen, be a Kentucky resident, have a high school diploma or GED (or be working towards your GED with AOKY), have not earned an associate degree or higher, be enrolled in or accepted to an eligible postsecondary institution in an approved program of study, and not be in default on any obligation to KHEAA. The program focuses on tuition payment for those enrolling in the following disciplines; Advance Manufacturing, Business/IT, Construction and Trades, Healthcare, and Transportation and Logistics.

Christian County Public Schools will be building a new consolidated high school in the next 2 years in a partnership with Ford Next Generation Learning. This new high school will be a community driven education model. The current partnerships that Christian County Public Schools has with post secondary education in our community will become available for all students. This educational model will increase the number of students enrolled in post-secondary institutions. With the increased community partnerships with our educational organizations, we believe we will be able to work through any barriers there may be for the population in Christian County and we will be able to increase from 23.9% to 25% benchmark for *Percent of working age adults with an Associate degree or higher* .



**COUNTY TEAM MEMBERS**

**Economic Development**

Carter Hendricks	South Western Economic Development Council	Executive Director
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

**Elected Officials**

Wendell Lynch	City of Hopkinsville	Mayor
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

Steve Tribble	Christian County	Judge Executive
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

**Education**

Chris Bentzel	Christian County Public Schools	Superintendent
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

Carol Kirves	Hopkinsville Community College	Community, Workforce and Economic Development Chief
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

Penny Knight	Christian County Public Schools	Principal, Gateway Academy to Innovation and Technology
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

**Business & Industry**

Taylor Hayes	Christian County Chamber of Commerce	President/CEO
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

Mary Gleason Hencke	Siemer Milling	Human Resources
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

**Workforce Development**

Sheila Clark	West Kentucky Workforce Board	Director
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

Tom Sholar	West Kentucky Workforce Board	Business Liaison
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

**Disabled, Veteran, Ex-Offender, & Medicaid**

Jason Vincent	Pennyrile Area Development District	Executive Director
Name (Print)	Organization	Title

Karen Wallace	West Kentucky Workforce Board, Right Choice, Re-entry Council	Program Specialist
Name (Print)	Organization	Title